CIVILIZATION

THROUGH THE AGES

DESCRIBED BY

A TRANSMIGRATING BARD

BY

ELSA KAZI

SIND-PAK PUBLISHERS & BOOK-SELLERS
HYDERABAD (WEST PAKISTAN)
[illegible]

With best compliments
from
Thomas M. Bazi
to
Sadique [illegible].

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FOREWORD

Elsa Kazi does not need any introduction. She is a versatile writer, having nearly a dozen works to her credit in the fields of novel, drama and poetry. Being accomplished in music, poetry and painting on the one hand, and having developed a philosophical bent of mind on the other, she reveals herself as an eminent 'artist-thinker' in all her writings, both in prose and poetry. In her last voluminous work '*Old English Garden Symphony*', she has probed deeply into the problems of human nature and the Universe, and also, as an accomplished artist, created a musical symphony out of the meaningful contents, interspersed the whole narrative with marvellous pieces of poetic prose, and painted word-pictures of beautiful garden scenes and flower-beds of superb beauty. Since then, she has been engaged in writing a more serious work, 'Universe Revealed',* in which she has employed the method of intuitive philosophical thinking to explain the mysteries of Science and the Universe.

In the present book, '*Civilization Through The Ages*', she has broken an entirely new ground. Her talents as a novelist and a dramatist, have enabled her to conceive the over-all design of the book as a

* *To be published shortly.*

historical panorama in which a number of characters participate. 'Beard' is the hero who changes the chins of a number of personalities and gives an eye-witness account of different scenes and events all through the ages. It is obvious, the 'Beard' is only a convenient mouth-piece of the author who has attempted to describe, human civilization through the ages, with the insight and understanding mainly of a cultural anthropologist.

Giving throughout a correct historical perspective, the learned author has cast a critical glance at the various phases of human civilization—from the earliest Egyptian and Jewish civilizations to the Islamic civilization and its all pervading modernising and elevating influences. The book is a study of significant value patterns par excellence. It surveys attitudes and ideas, religious, social, and political concepts, human prejudices and prides that have held sway in various cultures and civilizations throughout the last 2500 years.

The learned author has also performed the rare role of an impartial historian and given through the eyes of 'Beard' an intimate and first hand account of institutions and personalities *as they were*, and has, thus, cleared up the 'historical' myths and smashed the stereotyped ideas deliberately built up by the protagonists of the 'partisan' history.

The book is couched in a simple but appealing style. The development of the narrative follows a

natural course once the dramatic element introduced by the author, viz., the transmigration of the Beard, is recognized and accepted. The author has remarkably succeeded in sustaining the interest of the reader, through an undertone of humour and the novelties of the ever-varying scenes and situations.

Hyderabad Sind
(W-Pakistan)
1-10-56.

Dr. N. A. BALOCH,
Professor of Education,
&
Head of the Education Department,
University of Sind.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

An essay entitled: 'Transmigrations of A Beard' (Related By Itself), for the first time, appeared in the fifth issue (December 15, 1953) of the 'TORCH' (then Fortnightly). At the time of its first insertion in the 'TORCH', it was not at all conceived even by the authress that the essay was going to be continued in as many as seventy-nine instalments and finally destined to take the shape of a book.

The authress was approached to contribute to the only newspaper in the English language throughout the then province of Sind (now merged since October, 1955 in the larger Province of West Pakistan).

The first instalment of the essay was so impressive that the authress was entreated to continue on the series. It meant a hard and strenuous labour on her part but she shirked not. Even if she had to leave for a few months for England, she prepared in advance the insertions to cover up the issues of the 'TORCH' which were to be issued in her absence.

Elsa Kazi, the talented authress, like a research scholar, referred to so many books to give to the readers an authentic version of several historical facts and events narrated by her through her chosen medium—A BEARD.

She found in 'A BEARD' a most suitable medium which could be well-assigned the role of an ever-present witness in all ages and at all places to see the persons, things and events involved in the story for itself and then relate the same through the vocal pen of the authress.

Since, the original essay has taken the book form it became unavoidable to select a suitable title to suggest a comprehensive idea of the contents of the book to one who reads its title on the dust cover.

'Civilization Through the Ages' (Described by a Transmigrating Beard) has come to be the title of the book. It has been brought on the shore of imagination by the same wave of inspiration which, at first, stirred her cranium to evolve a tiny piece of literature into a precious treasure of knowledge, a most valuable 'work for all time'.

In her book, the students of civilization, in particular, and of the History, in general, will find plenty of research material for their enlightenment and guidance on these very vital subjects of human knowledge.

Every reader will have his own angle of vision and his own standard of appreciation of the contents of the book, hence we leave it to the reader to form his own judgment and to acquire whatever he or she is able to do by studying the book.

Ahmad Muhammad Qazi

Hyderabad,
October 6, 1956.

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Corrections

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32	37	we heard that
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CHAPTER I.

The Beginnings

This is about the middle of the twentieth century. I am the beard of an old gentleman of seventy. He is a good master. He is a very religious man and looks after me properly. When I appeared on his chin for the first time, he was only eighteen years old. He is the son of a rich farmer, out here in the East, and when he was twenty, he was sent to England to study law. For fifty years I have kept him company during which time he never thought of shaving me even once. But now, in this life my time is over as I am not only a white beard, but my master's life too will come to an end soon, as the doctor says he suffers from high blood pressure. What I have heard and seen during the fifty years I was with him, is very interesting, especially the time that he passed in England from the year nineteen hundred upwards. But at present I would like to talk about the strange things that I have experienced during my many rebirths, as we beards never die as long as good mother Earth with all her creatures exists. We are always being reborn, and

therefore I do not worry too much about death as I know I shall live again.

How many different shapes my rebirths have taken through thousands and thousands of years, I cannot recollect and I cannot say what I was before I became a beard at all. But I know that I used to be very ignorant and that, owing to my travels through many centuries and countries, I have gained a lot of knowledge.

They say Adam was created with a beard, but I cannot be certain of that since I have not seen him............It was more than 3500 years ago when for the first time I became conscious of being rocked hither and thither by the breeze. I had eyes and looking about, I noticed that I was attached to a slender stem about two feet high, which terminated in a panicle with long 'awns' that looked like a beard. Yes, I was the beard of some kind of plant which, as I heard long after, was called "Beard Grass". It grew in a waste ground near a big forest, and inspite of its beard, it was so delicate and frail, that I thought, I should call it "my mistress" and not "my master". Not far from it was a hut constructed of wood and straw. A rough man, wearing only a skin came out there every morning and returned at noon with lots of killed animals. Sometimes he was accompanied by a boy of about ten years who wore also nothing but a skin. Then one day I heard a great row in the hut. The boy ran out screaming, chased by the man who beat him with a stick. The boy fled and disappeared in the forest; but afterwards he returned still crying and sat down close to my mistress. When he raised

his eyes and saw my mistress dancing in the breeze looking so happy, he jumped up angrily and as though he envied the plant's contentment, he roughly pulled it up with the root, thrust it to the ground and trampled upon it. This seemed to me a very wicked thing to do and from the very start I did not form a very high opinion of those creatures called: "human beings". This brutal act was the end of my mistress. It was also the end of me as I dried up and died. But it seemed not long before I was reborn.

*   *   *   *   *

This time my mistress was not a plant but a large cat with bushy whiskers resembling bristles, growing from each side of the upper lip of the cat's mouth. This was the form that I had taken, "Bristly Whiskers of a She-cat!" I could understand the language of the people as it is a peculiarity of beards to understand the languages of all peoples in the world. So I heard that I was in a country called "Egypt". And that was about 3000 years ago. I came to know that the people here worshipped many deities to whom certain animals were sacred, and I found that my mistress was such a sacred animal. I heard that each town had at least one temple dedicated to the chief divinity of the place which was represented by a statue kept in the temple, and had a head resembling that of its sacred animal. The statue had its residence in the inner chamber of the temple, and by its side a living symbol in the form of a sacred animal was kept, and it was believed that the chief divinity would make its wishes known to the people by means of the behaviour

of this animal. My mistress was seated on gold-embroidered cushions close to the inner chamber, and was being fed on rich foods, such as baked mice, fish and thick cream. She prized her whiskers apparently very much, for after every meal she took up her paw, first one and then another, licked it and rubbed her whiskers intensely, so that I was washed and cleansed thoroughly from all the fats and creams that had remained in my hair and made me feel sticky.

The services in the temple were conducted by the priests and sometimes by scribes and the king himself. I saw that the heads of slaves were shaved and that the nobles, high officials and the king himself wore false beards, square and curled, and also wigs. The priests bowed before my mistress and studied her movements, for every gesture might disclose a wish or command of the chief divinity. But I was horrified to see that other animals and sometimes human-beings were sacrificed in the temple, and I hoped that such a gruesome fate would never befall my mistress. After meals my mistress would fluff up her fur, arch her back, close her eyes and sit quietly for an hour or so, and then the priests said she was meditating.

One day she refused to take her food, and her indisposition was said to be caused by some action of the people that had displeased the chief divinity. Prayers and sacrifices were offered. Costly presents of gold and silver were laid before the sacred animal, but nothing availed and after a few days my mistress died mourned by the people. Her body was embalmed and the pomp

with which she was buried I shall never forget. I was sure that she had died of over-feeding as she had grown abnormally fat. I shrivelled up, and looking forward to my rebirth, died too after some time.

* * * * *

When I regained consciousness, I found myself in constant company of a goat. I realized that I had been reborn as the beard of a goat. It was not a she-goat as it was not being milked by its owner, a rough primitive looking man, with long hair and a large black beard. I found that this black beard was much gentler than its rough master, for whenever it could find an opportunity it started a conversation with me in beard-language. It told me mournfully that my master, the he-goat, would not have to live long since her owner the wild man, would kill it soon for sacrifice to his clay-idol. I had seen this idol which was situated behind the hut of the wild man. It had eyes of hard red berries and a large open mouth besmirched with goats' blood. Whenever I saw it I was terrified and I whispered to my master, the goat, to run away; but alas! Neither human-beings nor animals could hear the language of beards, nor they understand it. Only beards among themselves can talk and understand their own language. I saw that the wild man owned several other goats; but they were she-goats and were being milked. The worst was that they were kept apart and I could not even talk to their beards.

It was my ambition to become the beard of a man, for although I had seen that human-beings are

cruel creatures, I knew that their beards were gentle and loving to each other, and were always treated well by their masters, as I had seen that even this wild man stroked his black beard in quite a gentle manner and never pulled it. It would have been indeed a strange thing to see a man pulling and maltreating his own beard!

After several months the wild man brought home another goat which was also a he-goat but much younger than my master. No sooner had this goat arrived when my master was slaughtered for sacrifice. The blood of the poor goat was poured into the mouth of the clay-idol and the flesh was devoured by the wild man, and although I was sorry for my master to meet with such a sudden death, I. could not help being glad to be released and to receive perhaps a promotion. And indeed, I was reborn as the beard of a man.

CHAPTER II.

Jehova and Bel

I found that my master was a Jew and that I was very long, thick and black. I came to know that I was not a "sacred animal's whiskers", but a "sacred beard" of a man. My master seemed very fond of me. He caressed me with his hand many times a day. He was very kind to me; washed me and brushed me carefully, and never let any dust offend me. I noticed that all the Jews had beards and that they looked upon them as most sacred things. Oh what a lovely time I had! No one was permitted to touch me with a rough hand, and anyone who begged a favour of my master, raised his folded hands towards me, me the beard! I was of such great importance that my master swore by me and this oath was never to be violated, and when two parties had fought and desired to make peace, they touched each others beards. When any matter was being decided, the beard was often called up as a witness. To abuse a man's beard was almost as much as to kill the man himself. It was a great honour for a child to be allowed to kiss me or to touch me

lovingly and gently. Yes I had been raised and was almost worshipped.

My master was very rich. He had many wives; but I could see that he had no use for all those wives. A graceful woman called Sahra, who was the mother of his favourite children, seemed the only wife he really loved. She was always in his company, he never offended her or was rough to her, and he granted her every wish. Once I heard him say to a friend that he wished he could afford to have 25,000 wives like Solomon. Not because he needed them but because similar to Solomon, who kept his Harem to rival his Egyptian father-in-law, he would also like to show to the world his wealth. From these words I gathered that many wives were property in the same way as many herds of cattle, fields and houses.

My master had quite a lot of children and he had the power to kill them if they went against his principles, or even to sacrifice them to his God *Jehova.* Each household of consequence, such as my master's, dispensed law and justice in its own circle in the manner that seemed suitable for the occasion. The appeal court was Jehova and I found that the nation was only bound through religion. Inspite of his strictness, my master was very kind to his children, and he exhibited often great love for them. I remember one day when he instructed one of the smaller boys in religion. He told him that the name *Israel* meant *God doth Battle.* He said 'El' was a short form of *Elohim*, another name for Jehova. He told the boy that Jehova was the warrior that always fought on

the side of the Jewish nation called *Israel*, and that the *Israelites* were the people in which He alone took interest. Later on I found that all that a Jew asked from his God was His 'Help' during life. I never heard the words 'Salvation of the Soul', until I was reborn twice. Then I heard also of a Heaven and a Hell. Punishments or rewards after death did not seem to concern the Jews, for they said after death all men were alike. In some sense this appealed to me.

One day there was a wedding in the house. A son of my master took a wife. A grand feast it was and even I had a taste of the rich savoury dishes and the delicious olive-and-fig sweetmeats that my master consumed in a careless way. There were harp players, dancers and singers and the feast lasted for many days. The bride was not an outsider; she was a cousin of the bridegroom and I heard that in earlier times men could marry their sisters.

What I liked very much were the temples of the Jews for I did not see there the quaint images I had seen in the temples of Egypt. There were no images at all in the Jewish places of worship, nor had they more gods than one, and although Jehova was the God of the Jews only and did not care for any other nation, I thought even such a God was better than many gods.

My master reached a very high age and when he died I was buried with him. I kept on growing for a time as we beards can grow even when our masters are laid to rest; not for long though, and

after I had expired too, it did not seem so very long before I was reborn as the beard of another man.

* * * * *

Soon after my rebirth I found that my master was one of the treasurers of Nebuchadnezzar the ruler of Babylon, a city of great splendour, built on the banks of the river Euphrates. Myself and my brother-beards that I saw at court, we all were arranged in tight curls, and however neat and tidy that looked, I had a sense of being imprisoned. I complained loudly in beard-language but I was not heard. My cousins the moustaches and uncles the head-hair, all complained in the same way for all of them were curled and pressed like myself, and were perfumed and richly oiled which made matters worse. I noticed that in this country the beard was not a sacred object, but was rather a sign of wealth, pomp and power, and the pride men took in their beards was surprising. My master wore ear-rings, armlets and other ornaments. He was very conceited although there was no cause for conceit since he was neither handsome nor clever; moreover he was not a good man. I saw that he treated his subordinates with contempt and the slaves feared his savage disposition. One of my brother-beards told me that my master had poisoned the first husband of his wife in order to marry her. I was aghast on hearing that my master was as wicked as all that and I began to dislike him extremely. His favourite wife, for the sake of which he had become a murderer, was very beautiful,

but as cruel and proud as her husband. She was very fond of ornaments and rich, colourful attire: but more than all she loved the very sight of gold. She egged her husband on to steal slabs of gold from the treasury he was in charge of. Her craze was to hoard gold and the coffers in her chamber were heavy with the precious metal. To feast her sight on gold she would ask the priest to take her up the temple which Nebuchadnezzar had built. She would climb up the winding stairs in the company of the priest and her husband, my master. It took a long time before they reached the summit, as the temple was said to be 600 feet high. The winding stairs led to the shrine in which stood the image of the deity 'Bel', forty feet high and of solid gold. By its side stood two other golden statues, associates of 'Bel'. I had never seen anything like this before and the height of the statue of Bel and its golden glory dazzed me. Here my master's wife pretended to worship, but I could see in her gleaming eyes the lust of gold and nought else beside.

I heard that Nebuchadnezzar was a very ambitious ruler. He had wanted to build a tower as high as the heavens. Every brick bore his name and I thought the slaves that had been employed to construct this colossal edifice must have been altogether numberless. In later centuries I heard that this structure was called "The Tower of Babel", and that God had destroyed it in wrath and had confounded the language of the people and that this was the cause of the many different languages in the world. I heard

also that in reality this tower was the temple dedicated to the deity 'Bel'. Another thing I saw, were the beautiful gardens with trees and flowers that the ruler had created for his favourite wife. Because she loved the hills of her own country and disliked the plains of Babylon, he had constructed these gardens on top of a series of strong arches seventy-five feet high, giving the impression of a slope. Water for the gardens was drawn from the river Euphrates by means of a machine-like screw. I heard that these lovely gardens were called "the hanging gardens of Babylon"., and were famous throughout the world.

* * * * *

One morning I heard a great uproar in the palace, for the King had suddenly lost his senses. There and then he had been deprived of all his greatness and glory. He imagined that he was a man no longer, but had become a beast, and like a beast he crawled on all fours out of the palace and went to the fields to dwell there and eat nothing but grass. Everybody was horrified to see his condition. Officials, nobles and friends, among them my master, tried in vain to persuade him to return to the palace, and no physician was able to cure his madness. Afterwards I heard that a holy man named 'Daniel' had been appointed as Regent while the King was mad. Daniel was a Jew and had been brought to Babylon as a slave. Rough soldiers had thrown him into a den of lions that were meant to devour him. But the saintly light in his eyes conquered the brutes and commanded them not to approach him. When the Babylonians

saw that the lions crouched in fear before Daniel, they were seized with fear themselves. They freed the captive and treated him with respect and awe. Owing to his great wisdom and saintliness he rose to a high position in the state. When he saw what had happened to the King, he deplored his terrible fate in the following words: "He was driven from men and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hair were grown like eagle's feathers and his nails like bird's claws."

*   *   *   *   *

My master lived to see Nabonidus and his son Belshazzar, who was a ruthless, cruel man. One night he gave a feast to which hundreds of guests were invited. It was a tumultous gathering, and amid singing, shouting and laughter, the guests were informed that they were drinking wine out of the golden vessels that Babylonian soldiers had snatched when they had plundered the Jewish temples. Hearing the vulgar news, the revellers got inspired with base joy and drank in excess, ridiculing, abusing and reviling the poor Jews. But suddenly something happened that made their blood freeze. Death-pale they sat as though paralysed. The musicians dropped their harps and the dancers shrieked and fled, for there appeared on the wall of the banquet-hall a mysterious writing. An invisible hand wrote the names of the weights of the Babylonian market. Seeing this, the guests seemed to have got sober all at once and their hair stood on end with terror. There was no doubt that this was the hand of some deity. No one could

solve the mystery. At last Daniel was sent for to explain the meaning. He said that the writing announced the doom of Babylon in the following words: "God has numbered the days of thy kingdom and finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians." This is what the names of the Babylonian weights on the wall meant. The guests fled in horror and my master crawled away to his appartment. But what holy Daniel had predicted came true that very night. Belshazzar was killed by the Persians who had surrounded the palace. My master was aroused by shouts of men and screams of women. A Persian warrior entered his chamber brandishing a dagger. He was accompanied by a slave who carried a torch. Before he could act, my master snatched the torch from the hand of the slave and thrust it into the face of the soldier setting his beard on fire. In a second he was enveloped in flames. The slave fled and my master jumped from a low balcony into the palace grounds. Dodging the crowd of Persians that were scattered all round, he crawled through thickets and trees until at last he had gained open ground. Creeping through high grass and bushes he left the palace and its tumult behind. He climbed the city-wall with great difficulty and made for a gloomy forest. Here he found a dimly lighted hermitage at the side of which was a shrine with a stone image of *Bel*. The old hermit had a white unkempt beard, and was clad in a garb of rough material. At his feet sat two men which I thought must be his disciples. My master told him who he was, asking

for shelter. The hermit stared at him for a while and then burst into grim laughter. He raised his voice and cried: "Ah! thou art the man who has killed my brother in order to possess his wife! I saw thee pouring poison into his wine when he was drunk at the feast! Thou dost not recognize me. Grief and age have altered me and for sorrow I became a hermit: year after year I begged *Bel* to send thee to me, and now he has heard my prayers." Hearing this, my master turned and fled. But the hermit shouted to the men at his feet: "Seize him! Seize him and give him to *Bel* who is waiting for him!" In vain my master wrestled with the two men who, though old, were very strong. I had seen them before. They were actually some of the slaves that my master had maltreated in former days. They overcame him and dragged him to the shrine where they killed him and sacrificed him to the idol. I wondered at the strange ways of fate. It seemed not only the hour of death was predestined but also the method how, and in what circumstances death should take place.

When my master was dead, I was still alive for a while, and I mused on the idle dreams and vain ambitions of human-beings who seemed to think that they could live for ever, not realizing that they might be plucked at any moment from the height of their glory and vanish. I compared the Israelites with the Babylonians and I found that there was a great difference between them. I could easily state that the Jews were morally superior to the Babylonians, and I decided that this was due to their form of worship.

They had but one God of which they formed no images, while the Babylonians had many gods in shape of statues in their temples. It seemed to me that it was owing to idol-worship that a people becomes corrupt and degenerated. Anyway I was happy to gain my freedom, and be relieved from torturous Babylonian "beard-culture".

CHAPTER III

Slaughter and Espionage

"When I grew conscious of my rebirth, I looked about and beheld a great number of warriors all round who seemed to rest in front of the tents that were pitched everywhere. I was the Beard of one of these warriors, and listening to what was said, I found that I was in a land called Macedonia whose ruler was Philip II. By the side of my master lay a shining helmet, a shield and a spear. He talked to a friend about the great courage of Philip, whose power and fame were increasing daily. He talked also of Alexander, the son of Philip, who was the pupil of the great Philosopher Aristotle. But he deplored the wild superstition and the bad temper of Olympias, the mother of Alexander...A soldier nearby hummed a song praising the beauty of his home-land and the blue Aegean Sea. My master joined him, and then took up a bronze mirror and gazed into it. I saw that he was a young, handsome man, and I noticed that I myself was a fine beard. But as far as I could make out, no one here thought that the beard was

sacred or an object of beauty; but it was rather a sign of manhood and strength.

Soon my master and all the troops donned armour and the marching began. Philip went to besiege Byzantium and Perinthus; and I heard that while he was away, his son Alexander, who was only sixteen years old, stayed in Macedonia as regent...

After sometime there was excitement and talk among the troops. I heard that a quarrel had arisen in the Royal house because Philip had put away his wife Olympias and married the daughter of Attalus. Olympias as well as her son Alexander were furious at the action of Philip, and both left the Royal abode. Philip tried to effect a reconciliation, but before he could succeed, he was assassinated.

My master became a warrior in the army of Alexander who was about twenty years old now, and here my first sufferings began, as that young, but mighty general said that *in war beards become handles for the enemy to get hold of.* So he ordered the beards of all his soldiers to be removed.

Oh what a slaughter of beards it was! What a hard time I had! I struggled to reappear, but whenever I only peeped out, I was destroyed again. Only when the troops rested after a victory was it possible for me to grow again. My master had yielded with protest to the shaving ordeal. From that day he disliked Alexander and he said to his best friend that Alexander was brutal, vain and sly.

Alexander had subdued the Athenians and Thebans. He had granted to every Hellenic city independence and self-government. My master said to his friend that Alexander had done that on purpose, he had proof of it. He had done it to *'reduce Greece to slavery'* as he knew that every independent city would fight the other, and so they would destroy each other.

I had grown again as my master was on leave, and he had business in Athens. Here, I saw many beards, old and young; dark-brown, black and snow-white and some were dyed. It was a delight to see my brothers as we beards do not recognise frontiers: we are no nationalists, and have no prejudices. We know of brotherhood. Hence we greeted each other with great affection......in silence. I saw that the streets were mostly frequented by men. I heard that married women were confined to the house and did not move out, except on religious festivals. These women were quite uneducated, and I heard that their husbands preferred the company of courtesans or beautiful youths to that of their wives. The wife had to obey her husband like a slave, and I heard that Aristotle asserted that woman was not only intellectually but also morally inferior to man. My master did not like that. He said to his friend that his sister was very chaste, very beautiful and also very clever. I heard it say that woman is a 'Necessary Evil' and that all philosophers thought so. I also heard that Aristotle had advised that surplus children should be thrown on the dumps outside the town to die, so as to

prevent over-population. I saw that low class women were treated with bestial cruelty and were often beaten to death for small offences. The adulteress had to die, as I had seen it among the Jews. Woman was mere property here too, and I heard that "a certain man, called *'Parsion'* bequeathed his wife on his death-bed to a friend."

My master hated the great orator Demosthenes, because, he had inflamed the Athenians and Thebans against the Macedonians. He said that such powerful and cunning orators should not be allowed to exist, because they could sway people's opinions, and that what is called *'Rule of the People'* would become *'One Man's Rule'*, the people doing the biddings of the despot 'Orator'. He said such orators even meddled with the law, and writing speeches for the accused, could prevent the worst criminals from being punished. I soon came to know that real judges and lawyers did not exist, and that the accused had to defend himself. Even the jury could be swayed by men like Demosthenes, and I heard it say that the children of the accused should not be permitted in court so as to influence the jury by their weeping and howling. I saw that low class criminals were beaten till they were dead. I heard that 90 per cent of the population were either slaves or workmen, which, according to Aristotle, could not be moral and therefore could not be educated. In the temples, where my master went sometimes, I saw statues of the most beautiful men and women which were the gods and goddesses of the Greeks. I thought these

statues were better than the ugly golden images I had seen in Babylon.

My master had discarded his armour and walked about in the city in plain clothes. One day he mixed with a group of citizens. One of them was a tall old man with a long white beard, who seemed to lecture the others. He had a mighty angry frown when he said that Aristotle was wrong saying that woman was inferior to man. He said that he had abused his own mother saying this, and that indeed his mother must have been inferior having given birth to a man who had only half a brain that had only room for men and not for women which were the other half of humanity. He said that Aristotle in his book on morals had not even censured the base habit of men to adore and love beautiful boys, and that he was responsible for that vice since he had condemned the fine Athenian women so that men could find no good in them. He said that all the wisdom and the beauty-worship only bred corruption because it had no moral foundation, and he cried: 'Beware of Grecian culture, as it is poisoned by the snake of corruption, the begetter of cruelty.' Then he reproached the philosopher Plato for having said in his 'Ideal Republic' that only soldiers needed education, and that the government should give the people any kind of religion even if it was a great hoax, just to keep them away from revolting and giving trouble to the authorities. Later, my master said to his friend that he had been sent by Alexander to find out what the people said.

That night when my master was asleep, I kept awake. I remembered the time when I had been the beard of a Jew and had heard it say that the Jews were a moral people...According to what I had heard, the Greeks were not a moral people, and therefore all their wisdom and love for beauty bred only corruption and cruelty. I began to think that Greece was a house built on sands".

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"At dawn my musings were interrupted by shouts and calls to arms. My master jumped from his bed and the first thing he did was to soap his cheeks and chin and destroy my healthy growth. What a terrible shock I received! My dislike for Alexander increased, for he, and only he was responsible for the first massacre of beards. I was imprisoned beneath the skin, and could only hear muffled noises and could see nothing. Stubborn as I was, I made a great effort to grow again. I managed to become a three-day-old baby-beard, and that I could do because fighting was going on and the soldiers had no time to shave. I heard that Alexander was out to conquer the great Persian Empire. But while he was on the way, Thebes revolted and he had to return. He punished the Thebans by razing the city to the ground.

I heard that the Persian ruler Darius had gathered a very large army and was laughing at the few thousand soldiers of Alexander. But Alexander, who was

said to be master of strategy, fell suddenly upon him, and routed his army, while Darius himself fled.

Meanwhile my master had been promoted for bravery and had become a lieutenant. I heard this news with one ear only as I had been shaved again. I came to know that all the cities of the vast Persian Empire opened their gates to Alexander, bringing forth their enormous treasures. His very name terrified them, and where-ever he came, he entered without fighting. Any city that opposed him was razed to the ground, its men were killed, its women made slaves; but often not a man, woman or child were left alive. Whenever I had a chance to grow a bit, I saw terrible things. Blood flowed in streams, and I witnessed such tortures and cruelties that I often wished I would not grow again, not to see all these atrocities. I found that the vanity of Alexander was boundless and that he considered himself of divine origin. I heard that the oracle had revealed that he was not the son of Philip but the son of 'Zeus' the supreme god of the Greeks, and he thought divine honours should be paid to him by everybody.

All the cities of Egypt opened their gates to him, placing their treasures at his feet, and at Memphis he built a town which he called 'Alexandria'. In this land I heard strange stories. My master said to a friend that although ruled by the Persians, the people still worshipped animals, even cats, and that servants were buried alive with their dead masters, which reminded me of my own fate.

Darius, having revived, attacked Alexander with an army even larger than before; but again he was defeated and had to take to flight once more. When our army entered Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire, the ear-splitting shouts of triumph of the soldiers re-echoed through earth and skies. I found that my master was struck at the magnificence of that city. Indeed, such glorious buildings and gardens I had never seen, and oh... Here I was in the land of beards! Beards, beards everywhere! Even all the warriors were allowed to grow beards. I saw that beards were objects of great pride here. But in a way I was glad that I was not one of these beards, for they resembled the Babylonian beards. They were curled even more rigidly, built up in a great mass of ringlets, the moustaches being worked in with the hair of the beards so that no mouth was visible. I would have felt very uneasy pressed in this manner. I saw that the city was well regulated, and no-where I saw disorder. I heard that the name of the Prophet of the Persians was Zoroaster and that they worshipped 'Ahuramazd', the god of light. In their temples I saw no images, and I heard it say that theirs was a pure religion. They worshipped the sun, the fire and all objects that gave light. I thought, to worship the sun was rather a good thing. Sometimes when encamped beneath the starry skies, and my master slept amidst flowers in the field on a warm summer night, I saw the sun rising at dawn, and oh... What a beautiful sight it was! A crimson disk shooting forth rays of red gold slowly ascending the heavens, setting the

landscape on fire. It was no wonder that people worshipped the sun, an object of such beauty. I had heard that the Greeks worshipped the sun also, but they had made a statue of a beautiful youth which they called 'Apollo' and worshipped it as the sun god. That was surely not as good as the real sun which seemed alive, while the statue was dead stone.

I heard that the Persians had slaves—Harems and Eunuchs; but inspite of all their pomp and luxury, they appeared more serious than the Greeks. I saw that they were less cruel and that they knew of justice, law and order.

The image of the Greek wine god 'Dionysus' and his priests went everywhere with the army, and I heard that 'Dionysus' bestowed fortune upon those who drank wine in abundance. When hoping for victory, Alexander drank more than usual, and thanksgiving for victory took the shape of drunken orgies. He feasted for quite a long time in Persepolis, then he set the city on fire and burnt it down. Oh, how it hurt me to see that lovely town destroyed! All the men were killed, women became slaves and Alexander carried away a treasure that I believe would equal 13,80,00,000 million dollars in our modern times.

Soon after this, I heard that Darius had been murdered in Bactria by one of his governors, who afterwards usurped the throne. The villain, however, was caught by Alexander. He lost his ears and nose and then was killed. Alexander was master of the whole Persian Empire."

"For quite a long time I had heard whispers in the Army. Several times I caught the names 'Parmenion' and 'Philotas'. I came to know very soon that these were the names of two great generals, father and son, who had fought loyally by the side of Alexander and were his friends. They had won glorious victories and people feared their names as much as Alexander's. Now that Darius was dead and the whole Persian Empire, nay, the whole world lay at the feet of Alexander, may be these two generals were no longer required. There was a rumour that not only half of the spoils and glory, but half of the Empire should go to them. Soon they were accused of knowing of a plot against Alexander, and I heard whispers that this was a false accusation. Philotas swore that he knew nothing about this conspiracy. Then he was tortured to confess. Afterwards we heard what had taken place. The report said. that: "Hidden by a curtain, the conqueror of the world watched the agonies and scoffed at the screams of a friend who had fought by his side in a hundred fights." I heard that he was well-nigh tortured to death and in his great plight he confessed what he did not know of, and then he was put to death. My master had not been far away at the time of the torture, and I had just grown again a bit, but when I heard those piercing screams of a courageous military man, every hair of mine writhed at the horror of such a shameful deed. My master said Alexander did not deserve to be called 'Great', but should be called 'Alexander the Small', while I thought 'Alexander the Beast' was good enough for him.

Parmenion, the father of Philotas, was still alive. Nothing could be found against him, and Alexander sent spies, who came to him as friends and tried to get some clues by conversation with him. But they could not succeed and they returned to Alexander assuring him that Parmenion was innocent. Upon this, Alexander sent a message to Parmenion telling him that no harm would befall him. At the same time he gave orders for his assassination, and when Parmenion perused the consoling message, a dagger pierced his back and he expired. My master said that cruelty and hypocrisy could not go further.

At Marcanda, where the Army rested, the drinking bouts took no end. I could grow a bit now and my master was present at every such revelry. One night, drunken Alexander boasted of having won all the victories himself because he was of divine origin. A friend of his, who once had saved his life, reminded him that many victories had been achieved by the brave, old soldiers of his father, Philip, that had joined his army after Philip's death. Hearing this, Alexander grew furious and started scorning his own father. His friend tried to put him right, but it was no good talking to a wild animal devoid of every sense and control. He began to rave like a mad lunatic and rushing at his friend, he slew him. There was not a man present who was not horrified at that wicked deed. Although, Alexander when sober, was struck with remorse, the priests assured him that by drinking more wine he could appease 'Dionysus', the wine god, and he would absolve him. So all was well.

Soon after this, Alexander married, and at the marriage feast he tried to make the people acknowledge his divinity. His officers were disgusted, and a nephew of Aristotle came forth and boldly told him that he was a great Conqueror but no god. My master was present and I saw that Alexander's face was distorted with fury. It was not long before that honest truth-speaker was also accused of knowing about a conspiracy against Alexander who wished to get rid of him. He was tortured to confess what he did not know and then was put to death. My master and his friends despised Alexander for this brutal murder, and I began to hate him more and more.

Alexander now pressed on to India. When he had crossed the river **Jhelum,** he came to grips with Porus, an Indian king. We, beards, could grow now as no soldier or officer had time to shave since the struggle was a long and severe one. But at last it ended with defeat of Porus. Onward went Alexander until he reached the limit of the Punjab. Here the men refused to cross the river **Sutlej** and would not advance further. In the face of this opposition, Alexander was helpless. He caused twelve monuments to be erected to show 'How far he had advanced in his world conquest.'

Then the return began. In the Georosian desert the men suffered from heat and thirst and many died of sickness. Beards could grow here as no one thought of shaving. At last the trial was over, and I saw that at Susa, Alexander married again; this time two

wives. Then he made preparations to invade Arabia. But ere long a great friend of his caught a fever and died. Alexander was plunged into wild grief. He carried the dead body to Babylon and the funeral rites, that could not be performed without mad orgies of feasting and drinking, were prolonged indefinitely. Alexander was never sober. Either he was drunk or he was sleeping. At last he fell prey to fever himself, and my master said that 'Nemesis' had taken his speech away even before he died. Alexander was only thirty-three when he passed away. After his death, his followers helped themselves to his kingdom. Everywhere chaos prevailed. In the Royal palace Alexander's wives and relations killed each other with poison and knife. Like a house without foundation everything tumbled down. My master was stabbed by a soldier who hated him. As he lay dead I pondered upon all that had happened. I remembered that once my master had said that Alexander's greed for conquest; his spirit of vindictiveness; his obsession of being a god; his excess of drink; had blinded him to everything human, and that he had sunk to the level of a mere highway robber out to plunder the rich coffers of the Eastern states. He was not a guide but a destroyer of men. The cities he built were monuments of his conceit and vanity to perpetuate his own name and not for the benefit of humanity. He was a despot of the worst kind, sounding the death-knell wherever he came. My master said that the greatness of a man is not measured by how many countries he conquers

and how many free men and women he enslaves, but by making men and women free from slavery and helping them to develop themselves. Yes, I saw that the snake of corruption and cruelty was growing and I did not wish to be reborn in Greece."

CHAPTER IV

A Roman Emperor

I was reborn in a city called 'Rome', situated on the river Tiber. My master was a young man of high birth, a favourite of the Emperor 'Nero' and I was his clipped beard. I heard that the beards used to be a sign of the full-furnished man who was called 'Barbatus'; but that afterwards, when the Romans took to shaving, the beard was discredited and men with long beards were called 'Barbarous', a name derived, from Barbatus. For a time most beards had vanished. Then the clipped beard became the vogue in fashionable circles. I saw that Nero himself had a round, short, curly beard, and I heard that once he had sacrificed some of his beard-hair to Jupiter Capitolinus. This surprised me greatly as Jupiter had himself an enormous beard and I did not think he was in need of the few hair of Nero's beard; but Nero no doubt, thought a single hair of his beard was priceless. Such was his conceit!

At the court I saw a most beautiful girl, whose name was 'Acte', and who was the Beloved of Nero. I soon found out that my master too was in love with this girl whom he had known since childhood. But she looked upon him more or less as a brother, and I could see that she not only loved Nero, but almost worshipped him. She did not even mind whom Nero loved; she was not jealous, so great and pure was her love. This fact astonished me extremely, as in time I found that Nero was a very unworthy man; a cruel coward; a glutton and a hypocrite. He was possessed by the idea of being a great artist, acting and trying to sing to the play of his lyre. But all what he did was most ridiculous and discordant. His voice was croaking like the voice of a raven all out of tune, and when he played the lyre, it sounded like a quarrel of many cats. He revelled in food, and after a banquet he generally took an emetic to dispose of the meal in order to eat another one. Many of his lewd companions, all high-born 'gentlemen', brought their meals out several times so as to be able to gobble again and again the luxuries. Such was the uncontrollable itch of their palates! I thought it was a pity that they had not twenty stomachs as they could have made use of them all and this would have saved them the nasty business of vomiting so often. I was thankful that my master did not belong to this class of corrupts. He only pined for Acte. He often looked in the mirror, studying his face and sighing and I could see that he was quite good-looking. What a pity that Acte had such a miserable taste!

My master met her sometimes in the palace gardens, and falling at her feet entreated her to cease loving that wicked man; but she said her whole desire was to improve his character by her selfless love. At this my master laughed scornfully and said that she sooner would succeed to change the leopard's stripes than Nero's character. He then told her about the crimes that Nero had committed under the influence of his mother Agrippina, who herself had poisoned two husbands and murdered many others in order to bring her son to the throne. I heard that her second husband had been the Emperor Claudius, her own uncle, and that by intrigue she had deprived his only son Britannicus by his first wife, of his rightful place. In everything Nero had done her biddings. She ruled him entirely to attain greater glory for him and for herself. I heard that when Acte appeared on the scene, my master witnessed the furious demonstrations of Agrippina, who in her jealousy of Acte reminded Nero of all the crimes she had committed and of all she had endured for his sake; and she threatened him to expose the cause of his cousin Britannicus and proclaim that he was the rightful heir to the throne, whereupon the poor boy was poisoned by Nero at a banquet. I recoiled with horror hearing these dreadful stories, and still Acte would dote upon this criminal! I found that the gentle philosopher 'Seneca' was Acte's friend. He had brought Nero up, and together with him she tried to reform the villain. What a vain attempt it was! Nero had a wife called 'Octavia', a pure, gentle girl, sister to Britannicus; but Nero had

disliked her from the very beginning and she lived away from him.

Nero's vanity was so great that those who flattered him could make him do anything and win the highest positions at court or elsewhere. Hence his court was crowded with worthless sycophants; profligates; dancers and actors, who applauded all his idiotic, artistic performances. At first I wondered why my master headed the list of these sycophants; but soon I found out that it was because he wished to be Nero's steady companion, for that meant to be near Acte who was always with Nero. The emperor had no idea that my master was in love with Acte, otherwise he would have poisoned him at once.

I saw that Nero maintained his popularity only by his boundless generosity, and his large donations to the public. He feigned great sympathy with the poor, exhibited extraordinary clemency in case of doomed criminals, lavished money on the people and redressed all their grievances. Even the Senate was well disposed towards him, and the Greeks who had been subdued by the Romans, were loud in their praises of him, and in return got all the freedom out of him that they desired. They called him 'Divine Artist' and I heard Nero say that the Greeks were the only ones who understood his art.

By and by I saw that the Roman conquerors had adopted wholesale all that was Greek. The style of dress of Greeks; their customs; their philosophy;

their institutions; their gods and their law; but my master said to Acte that the Romans had improved Greek law and that the Greeks were mere barbarians compared to Romans.

Another surprise was in store for the wicked Agrippina. I heard that Nero had conceived a passion for Poppaea Sabina, a woman of high birth and great wealth whose wickedness and ambition were more than a match for Agrippina. She planned to remove everyone who opposed her marriage to Nero, who was enthralled by her great charm, I saw that Acte was forgotten and she retired to her villa, weeping bitter tears. Poppaea filled Nero with fear of his mother, saying that she was conspiring against his life with his enemies. Nero was scared to death and ordered a body of soldiers to murder Agrippina in the place to which she had retired, The poor Octavia too was brutally butchered. After this, Poppaea became Nero's wife.

Although Agrippina had been a very wicked woman, I did not like that Nero should have killed his 'Mother'. Nero's curly beard was of the same opinion. He was my friend and we often exchanged views. He shuddered at the sinful doings of his master and longed to be reborn in a better place and have a master who was a good man.

One day I saw a new coin in the hand of my master which he examined closely. It bore the image of Poppaea's head by the side of Nero's head, and soon after, I heard that her statues were being erected in the public parks. She certainly had

succeeded in her vicious designs. She had won glory by way of murder, and still more lives were to be destroyed.

I heard that Nero had been horror-struck at first at the murder of his mother. He imagined that he was being pursued by the revenging 'Furies', and my master often heard him jump from his couch and shrieking in the early morning hours after a night of debauchery. To forget the horror he plunged deeper into vice, encouraged by his infamous wife who planned to remove all those that were trusty advisers of Nero and therefore could point an accusing finger at him. Those who wished the good of Nero were either banished or poisoned, and worthless intriguers and friends of Poppaea took their places. The philosopher Seneca desired to retire. He had been the friend of Agrippina and therefore Poppaea considered him her enemy. But Nero did not give his permission for his retirement. He kept him by his side and he was watched closely. Nero had become jealous of his intellectual superiority. Yet he was still wanted, said my master to Acte, for writing the wonderful speeches that Nero delivered on public occasions.

I knew that Nero wished to transfer his passion for acting and singing to every man and woman, so as to show to the world that although anyone was able to act and sing, he alone was a born singer and actor. With this view he induced the nobles; Senators; Matrons; Citizens; nay every man and woman to act and sing and join the common rabble of actors and

singers, while he himself went on the stage giving performances of his croaking voice and his out-of-tune play on the lyre. He delighted in being awarded the first prize for poetry and singing, which always happened since he was the Emperor, and he went into raptures when the public applauded and he was crowned with laurels as the victor. He behaved like a child and the people enjoyed his mad doings. But his greatest passion was to appear in Greece and show his 'genius' there for the Greeks were after all the originators of Roman Art and their verdict was the only one that he valued. He continued to shower favour upon the East and the West. He was the idol of the populace and even the Senate was well disposed towards him, for he had cleared himself of the guilt of Agrippina's murder by sending a long list of her crimes to the Senate, insisting that she had committed suicide. Nevertheless he said to my master, who still was his favourite, that the 'Furies' were inhabiting his brain torturing him, although he was innocent.

Sometimes I wondered how my master was able to retain his position at court in face of the intolerance of the callous Poppaea. Then I thought that it must be owing to his tact, the abundance of flattery with which he tickled her vanity, and the fact that he feigned to fall in with all her wicked plans. I soon found that he did not leave the court inspite of Acte's absence there, because every courtier who asked for leave or retirement was branded as an enemy and the death-warrant was sure to follow him.

My master often visited Acte in her villa; but he went there at night and in disguise. I then heard their conversation and came to know all that had happened in and outside the palace. My master tried to persuade Acte to flee with him, but she would not listen to his proposals. She hoped for the day when she could return to Nero. One night, when we returned from such a visit, I heard screams and saw that people had gathered in the street where in front of a house a man was flogging his grown-up sons. My master enquired what was wrong and heard from the man that his sons had refused to deliver to him their earnings; whereupon my master went away satisfied. I gathered from this that the sons were complete salves of the father. They had no property and even their earnings belonged to the father. This appeared to me worse than what I had seen in Greece. I heard that a married woman too could not own property and was mere chattel of her husband. My master kept salves and I heard that their marriages were not recognized as legal. Their bodies were branded with hot irons for identification. I heard and saw a lot and came to know that the people were oppressed by heavy taxes and quite powerless before the nobles.

One night a great tumult arose and I heard shouts and screams in the distance. My master rushed out and found that the whole town seemed on fire. He hurried to the scene of the disaster. There was beating of drums and the people ran about in wild confusion, screaming and fleeing from the flames. I heard a man cry that his house and all the houses

made of timber, the wooden terraces of arenas and the trees of the parks were being devoured by the flames. No one could stem the tide of the fire and it spread rapidly. My master went back to the palace and I heard that Nero was absent. The fire raged for days till it was checked by the river. Afterwards it broke forth anew in other quarters. Nero had returned; but instead of giving orders to able bodies to bring the fire under control, he went to his villa of Maecenas and there he played his lyre and sang in his hoarse voice, looking down on the conflagration, enjoying the sight.

There were rumours that Nero had himself caused the fire. I heard that the people were angry and discontent, although Nero did everything to compensate their losses. They demanded the punishment of the culprit who had created the fire. My master said to Acte that scapegoats had to be found, and that the 'Christians' were being blamed for the disaster. Here I heard for the first time the name 'Christians', and I heard that this was the sixty-fourth year after the birth of one 'Christus' who had been crucified in Judaea whose followers they were. Persecution once started, continued. Every day new victims were brought. Soon they were asked either to embrace the Roman faith or perish. But the saintly people would rather die than change their religion. Nero went himself to the circus with my master and his lewd companions to witness these spectacles of torture. I saw crowds of helpless young and old men and women kneeling in the arena; then furious, hungry lions

were let loose who tore them to pieces and devoured them. The spectators went frantic with bestial ecstacy, cheering madly, demanding to see more blood. I was sure that I had never seen anything like this in Alexander's time and I said to myself that the snake of corruption and cruelty was prospering here and growing fat.

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I heard that the rebuilding of Rome had started. Houses of fire-proof stone were erected. Wider streets came into existence. Ample water supply was assured and all precautionary measures were taken in case of another fire. I heard that a very large space created by the conflagration was being reserved for the erection of yet another palace for Nero, and my master whispered to Acte that the fire had been caused in order to have that enormous space cleared of houses so that his palace could be built there. But Acte resented this idea and would not believe it. At completion everyone said the palace was a marvel of beauty, with its mile-long galleries; its unique decorations; its baths; its roof and walls plastered with gold and precious stones, dazzling the world with its radiance. It was called 'The Golden House' and was surrounded by the most beautiful gardens; and at its entrance I saw a marble statue of Nero about 120 feet high. But alas...My friend the curly beard of Nero and I, we soon heard that the Golden House was termed: 'A wild beast's den' and: 'The cage of every unclean bird'.

One day my master inspected the wonderful baths attached to the Golden House; and I was struck by their magnificence. They were wonders of beauty and luxury; fairy abodes of pleasure; at the same time museums that held all manner of priceless works of art; I heard that some of them were 200 yards long and I saw that the walls of their halls gleamed with rich mosaics of all colours. I saw beautiful marble statues, and perpetual streams of hot and cold water poured into large golden basins from mouths of lions that sparkled with gold and gems. Oh...How I grieved that a man with so much appreciation for the most beautiful things, should be such a monster of wickedness. I saw that the public baths which my master sometimes visited also were wonderful institutions of ellaborate skill and beauty.

I noticed that Nero had begun to maltreat Poppaea. He taunted her and accused her of the murder of his mother, blaming her for having enticed him to have her put to death. He made life intolerable for her, and when one morning she died, suffering torturous pains, the people said that she had been poisoned by Nero, although he seemed to mourn her death.

Gentle Acte was allowed to return now. My master took her to Nero's chamber where she scattered flowers at his feet saying: "Oh divine artist, be comforted...all troubles will pass and will be resolved into extreme happiness for thee." I wondered how she could call Nero 'Divine' knowing of his villanies.

The only explanation was that she did not believe that he had committed the crimes he was charged with. May be she thought the world was jealous of his greatness and therefore scandalised him. Her presence seemed to have a soothing effect on Nero and for a while there was peace in and outside the palace. Then there was suddenly a cry that a conspiracy had been discovered; a plot against Nero's life. I heard it say that this conspiracy was a true one for all the moral and virtuous men of Rome had combined to get rid of the vermin Nero, the pest of Rome. Nero was frantic with fear. He ordered wholesale executions in which he was helped by the Senate. I heard that even the Philosopher Seneca, who after all had retired, was sent a mandate to kill himself, or else face a torturous public execution. I heard that Seneca caused his veins to be cut and he died calmly in a most dignified way. My master said to Acte that Seneca had been a Stoic, and I understood that Stoics were people who remained calm in the greatest of troubles and never got excited. But even after all the conspirators had been executed, Nero, haunted by fear, went on sending death orders secretly to all those to whom the slightest suspicion was attached. He was aiming at 'Virtue' for he thought all those who hated his so-called artistic efforts, were his enemies. Hence there was a regular disease of suicides of those who received orders to destroy themselves, and the funerals seemed to take no end. While these mandates were going on, the public was jubilant that the conspiracy had been rooted out. The people went

to the temples bringing sacrifices, giving thanks to the gods that Nero was safe, and the tyrant appeared again on the stage with his lyre and his croaking voice.

But the friends and relations of those upright men who had been compelled to commit suicide, brewed revenge for the hideous wrongs done to their dear ones. My master said there was great discontent everywhere, and then Nero's popularity decreased rapidly. I heard that people were sick of the endless round of base pleasures and dastartly crimes and the long lists of doomed men that were being prepared every day. The Senate started intriguing against Nero. Ere long revolts broke out and desertion of the army took place, and one day the tyrant fled from the palace with only my master and his slave Epaphroditus, as his guard had refused to accompany him. Nero took refuge in a villa of friends some distance away. But I heard that he was being pursued, and his friends urged him to end his life before the arrival of the pursuers that would drag him back to Rome to be executed. But the tyrant and coward as he was, could not find courage to kill himself. He asked my master to stab him. But my master did not wish to stain his hands with the blood of a monster, and he refused. Nero wept and moaned deploring that a great artist as he was should leave the world. Then the horses of his pursuers were heard outside and Nero placed a sharp dagger against his chest; but he had not the courage to push it and his slave had to strike it home. He was only 30 years old when he died. His body was quickly burned, and I

heard that his ashes were received by Acte who deposited them in the family tomb 'Domitil', on the Pincian Hill. She went every day to the tomb scattering flowers there, weeping bitterly, and those who did not know about this, wondered that there should have been one soul that had loved the vicious tyrant. Soon the statues of Nero were demolished and his Golden House was set on fire, and when my master passed, I saw that the streets were flowing with melted gold.

My master went to Acte in her villa and asked her again to be his. He said he had waited for so many years for the departure of that wicked man Nero. I thought that was a foolish thing to say, as Acte got angry and said that his wishes must have hastened Nero's death and that she never would become his wife. Thereupon my master grew desperate. He drew out a dagger and stabbed himself. Death-pale he fell at Acte's feet and expired. She had not expected this. She shrieked with horror and collapsed, for after all she had loved him like a brother. I felt faint and wished it would be soon all over and I would be reborn in a country where people had more sense and understanding.

CHAPTER V

The Kingdom of Heaven and Hydra

Imagine my disappointment when I realized that I was reborn in the same old, cruel city where the furious lions used to tear the poor Christians to pieces in the arenas. At first I was not aware of it, because everything seemed so different, but when I heard the language, I knew where I was. So many hundred years had passed and I heard that this was the year 413 after the birth of the Lord Jesus Christus. I heard too that the head of the Christian religion was called a 'Pope', and that in these days the name of the Pope was Innocent I.

I noticed that a great number of temples had been demolished and in their places other buildings had arisen which were called churches. The style of dress of many people was also not the same, and I saw good many beards.

My master was a handsome young man of about twenty one. I was his beard, but I was not long. I was a short, soft beard of brownish colour. I was not

allowed to grow too long and I was being trimmed regularly. I saw that lots of men wore long brown garbs of warm material as it was winter and fairly cold. They wore hoods of the same material over their heads, and from their girdles dangled chains of beads at the end of which a cross was fixed. I saw also women who wore similar long gowns of dark blue colour. Their heads were covered with scarfs of the same hue that had broad margins of white thin material, covering half their foreheads and their cheeks, being tied below the chain, so that no trace of hair could be seen. They had the same chains of beads and crosses, and I heard that those men and women were called 'monks' and 'nuns' and I heard that they were Christians. I saw also plenty of people who wore the previous fashion with which I was familiar, my master being one of them; but neither he nor the others frequented those temples that were still intact, which made me suspect that they were Christians too, without being monks and nuns.

My master lived with his uncle, who had adopted him as his son. From the dress of his uncle I judged that he was also a monk, but perhaps of higher order. A large crucifix made of some shining material was suspended from his neck. Very soon I heard that he was an 'archimandrite' or abbot. I came to know that he was the head of an Institute in Alexandria wherein monks were lodged, and that he was in charge of several hundred monks. Soon I heard that these institutes were called 'monasteries'.

My master called his uncle 'Father Lucas'. He came sometimes from Alexandria to Rome on religious missions, and otherwise my mastar had the beautiful house and its gardens all to himself. This house had been given to Father Lucas by a friend and was not really his own, as monks must not possess any worldly property.

Whenever Father Lucus was away, my master invited all his friends. Then they discussed the Greek and Roman Philosophies; recited the poetry of Homer and Virgil and praised the old Greek and Roman gods, for they had embraced the Christian faith only nominally, and at heart they were still those who were now being called 'Pagans' or 'Heathens'. On certain days they went to the church close by for mere show. There I saw the statue of the Lord Jesus Christus nailed to a large cross. I saw also the statue of the mother of the Lord who was called 'The Virgin Maria', and there were many other statues of saints and apostles; but they were not so beautiful as the statues of the gods and goddesses which I had seen in Greek and Roman temples. I soon realized that beautiful things were wanted no longer, and I heard it say that Beauty tempted men to commit sin.

Whenever, Father Lucas came from Alexandria, he tried to persuade his nephew to accompany him back, enter his monastery in Alexandria and become a monk. But my master could not make up his mind to do this, and he had a good reason for it. I knew that he loved the daughter of one of his friends, a rich merchant who had not yet embraced

Christianity even nominally. The name of his daughter was 'Flamma' which means 'Flame' and indeed her dark eyes were like flames. She was dainty and graceful, could write spirited poetry and could dance very prettily. Her Father allowed her to recite her poems and perform her dainty dances at private gatherings to entertain friends. She was only sixteen years old, and my master had seen her at one of those gatherings and had fallen in love with her. She returned the love of my handsome master and she managed to meet him now and again at night in her father's garden. He desired to marry the girl and I knew that for this purpose he tried to persuade her father to become a Christian only nominally, because then his uncle might also give his consent to the marriage. But Flamma's father could not hear of a conversion to Christianity. He hated the Christians and he often had reproached my master for having embraced Christianity, though only nominally. But my master, warned him saying that Christianity had become the State religion and that paganism would no longer be tolerated. He told him that it was in his own interest to show that he had dropped the old gods, it would also possibly increase his prospects in trade. But the man would not listen to him, and after some time, I saw that his good feelings for my master were rapidly waning. Flamma herself did not send her old slave with secret massages to my master telling him to meet her in the garden at a certain hour during the night, and when my master met the old slave by chance one day and questioned him about Flamma, the poor man confessed that Flamma had said that

she did not care to come to the garden any longer. This shocked my master extremely and he wondered at the fickle hearts of women. He shut himself in his house, refused to see his friends, took very little food, and one night took out his dagger and looked at it, with a mournful sigh. This reminded me of my former master who had stabbed himself because 'Acte' had refused to marry him. I feared the worst and I was glad when Father Lucas arrived quite unexpectedly. Seeing his nephew in such a desperate mood, he must have guessed that he was in love, as he started in the course of the conversation with him, to belittle the graces of woman. Knowing his love for Aristotle and Plato, he dwelt on the low opinions that these philosophers had entertained concerning woman. He quoted also the sayings of many other great men to convince my master that woman was worth nothing. He mentioned the great Christian, 'Tertullian', who had said: "Woman thou oughtest always to walk in mourning and rags, thine eyes filled with tears of repentance. Thou art the devil's gate, the betrayer of the 'tree', the first deserter of the divine Law." He said that St. Augustine had asked: "Why was woman created at all?" And that the great Saint Ambrose had said about woman: "Remember that God took a rib out of Adam's body, not a part of his soul to make her." I also heard that St. Jerome had said: "Woman is the root of all evil."

My master seemed horrified to hear all these nasty things, and I was horrified too. Father Lucas

went on condemning woman, asserting that all pure-hearted men looked upon marriage as a great sin. His words seemed to make a deep impression upon my master. No doubt he thought Flamma had deceived him and no woman could ever be faithful. The beard of father Lucas was my friend. Hearing the words of his master, the abbot, he shook his head, telling me in beard language that in some countries **the beard is of feminine gender**, and should we be reborn in any of those countries, we would be more or less female beards, and the maligning of women would be a direct insult to us.

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One evening Father Lucas read to my master passages from the scriptures, and then I heard for the first time some of the sayings of the Lord Jesus Christus. These sayings were so beautiful that I was thrilled to the core. For the first time during my transmigrations I heard someone counsel gentleness and kindness, and for the first time I heard about the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. It sounded like a dream to me after all the cruelty and brutality I had witnessed throughout my lives. I listened most attentively when Father Lucas read and this is what the Lord Jesus Christus said: "But I say unto you which hear. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and unto him that smiteth thee on one cheek, offer also the other cheek, and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give

to every man that asketh of thee, and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again; do good and lend, hoping for nothing again. Judge not and ye shall not be judged; condemn not and ye shall not be condemned. Forgive and ye shall be forgiven. With the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again, **and why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?**"

I was struck by all these lofty sayings, and my master too seemed overwhelmed by what he heard. But I wondered why Father Lucas condemned all the women on earth when it was the holy order of the Lord that we should not condemn anything. Then Father Lucas read again: "Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, they spin not: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is today in the field and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he clothe, oh ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after and God, your Father, knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the 'Kingdom of Heaven', and all these things shall be added unto you."

Here Father Lucas stopped reading and addressing his nephew, he said: "Yes, my dear son, to follow the example of our Lord we must leave this world of sin and go in search of the Kingdom of Heaven."

My master then told him that he had made up his mind to renounce this wicked world and live only for the Saviour Jesus Christus. But hardly had he declared his intention, when Father Lucas began to discourage him from the enterprise, bringing before his eyes a gruesome picture of the terrible hardships he would have to bear during the period of probation, saying that his life would be nothing but hunger, thirst, work and sacrifice and that only men with strong will and character and a deep love for Jesus would be able to stand the severe trial. He asked him many times to consult his heart and find out whether he had really the courage to undertake this great ordeal as once having struck the bargain and vowed eternal celibacy, poverty and obedience, he could never retract. But my master remained adamant and said that nothing could shake his resolution, whereupon he was allowed to accompany his uncle to Alexandria.

Before embarking on his life of hardship, my master was taken by his uncle to a friend for a few days rest after the journey. From him Father Lucas heard what had happened in Alexandria during his sojourn in Rome. He heard that the new Patriarch Cyril by name, had started a violent persecution of all pagans and jews. He had driven thousands of jews out of the city with an armed force and pillaged their homes, and I heard that the gentle 'Hypatia' too was in danger. I soon came to know that Hypatia was a lady of great accomplishments. She was a pagan ; a

mathematician and philosopher, and a distinguished lecturer of fascinating eloquence. Her great intellectual powers drew hundreds of disciples to her class room, and I heard that one of her followers had been 'Synesius' who afterwards became Bishop of Ptolemais. He had written her letters full of reverence and admiration. Her great beauty, gentleness and modesty were as rare as was her intellectual genius. Her influence was immense and every one loved, revered and adored her. I heard that it was against her that wrath of Cyril was directed, as she preached what he called the wicked neo-Platonic pagan philosophy contrary to Christianity; not only that, but I heard that she was a friend of the Prefect Orestes towards whom Cyril entertained great hatred. One day we caught a glimpse of this extraordinary lady when she drove in her chariot to her class room. She looked like an angel, so beautiful, so refined, her face hallowed by a flowerlike delicacy and maidenly modesty. My master seemed struck at this saintly apparition, and I wondered what his thoughts must have been when gazing upon this heavenly vision, who was not a nun; who moved in the world, who preached to the world pagan philosophy and who was a 'woman'.

At length, after some stiff ceremonies, my master found himself in his lonely cell. There was a simple wooden cross with the Lord Jesus fixed to it, and that was the only ornament I perceived. My master's couch was the bare ground strewn with dry grass. Another object was an earthenware jug filled with water and a rough torch-like candle that was to be

lighted from the ever-burning fire in the monastery. Another thing was a very low stool that served as a seat for my master. His meals he took in the hall, called the refectory, together with his brother monks. They all sat on hard low stools at a long, coarse wooden plank elevated by short wooden poles. The meals consisted of nothing but bread and water. While they ate, they did not speak a word and their faces were hidden by their hoods that were pulled right over their eyes, so that they were hardly able to see their bread and water before them. One monk usually read to them passages from the scripture during their meals. This monk, I heard, was called a 'Reader' and was more educated than the others. In fact, few of the monks knew how to read and write, my master being an exception.

I came to know that the chain of beads suspended from my master's belt was called a 'Rosary'. On every bead a prayer was said, and at the end the cross, which closed the chain, was kissed. I found that communal prayers were said several times the day and psalms were chanted.

Almost all day my master was kneeling before the image of the Lord, telling his beads. On certain days there was work to be done, as every monk had to work hard to support himself. The monks made all kinds of things that were taught to them by those who had experience in making them. The articles were sold in the market and the money realized was used to purchase goods or was given in

charity. What a hard life it was for my master who had been brought up in luxury! Nevertheless, I saw that his religious zeal increased daily. He prayed even at night and often he fasted so that he sometimes fainted away.

But at last his hardest trials came to an end. Two years had passed and now he was being allotted a better cell with a couch; he received improved diet and sometimes wine instead of water. Then one day the world was startled by the terrible news that the fair Hypatia had been murdered! The report said: "She was torn from her chariot by fanatic Christian monks; was stripped naked in a public street; was dragged to a church nearby, was outraged, cut to pieces with oyster-shells, the flesh was scraped from her bones and finally she was burnt piecemeal." Cruelty of such revolting nature committed by Christian monks, caused my master almost to expire with horror: "Is this Christianity?" He cried: "Oh God where is Thy Kingdom?"

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Yes, the fair Hypatia, the innocent, virtuous, illustrious Hypatia had been butchered in the most bestial way conceivable. I was quite sure I had never seen the like anywhere throughout my transmigrations. The snake of cruelty was growing into a seven-headed 'Hydra', that even a hero like Hercules was no longer able to slay. It was for the 'Kingdom of Heaven' when it really came, to destroy this monster.

Christianity so far had not made the slightest difference to the cruelty of Judaea, Babylon, Greece or Rome. On the contrary, it seemed that these Christian times did surpass all others in cruelty, and I remembered the sayings of the Lord that Father Lucas had read to my master in Rome: "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Indeed, none of the things Jesus Christ had said were done by his followers. Surely they mocked him by doing everything contrary to his teachings. They disrespected him and nailed him again to the cross every time they exhibited hatred instead of love for their enemies. Perhaps my master's thoughts were similar to mine, as he groaned throughout the nights repeatedly muttering: "Oh God where is Thy Kingdom?" As the days and weeks passed he grew quieter, and then something happened which upset him anew.

One evening he sat upon his couch telling his beads. The earthenware jug filled with water stood upon the rough stool at his side and the candle close to him shed its light upon his beads. It was a warm summer night. The small window of the cell was open and scents of herbs drifted in with a gentle breeze. The flame of the candle began to flicker and dance and I thought suddenly of 'Flamma' and wondered where she could be now. I remembered her dainty dances which I compared with the dance of the candle flame. The breeze played in my hair and since it was very soft hair, it drifted towards the candle. Then in an instant the hair was caught by the flame and I, the beard, was set on fire. But my master with great

presence of mind seized the jug beside him and poured its water over him. He saved himself, but I was gone and my master was beardless. I did not mind my disappearance, for we beards do not die when scorched as long as our roots are in-tact, and my roots had not been hurt. The worst was that not only I had gone; but my cousin, the moustache, the head hair and even the eye brows of my master had vanished. He had jumped up touching his chin and cheeks and head with terror. He paced his cell groaning in agony, and I, yes, I had brought this misery and disgrace upon him by remembering Flamma and drifting towards the dancing candle flame! How could he show himself before the other monks in the workshop where they all worked together? Would they not think that he had shaved himself, a thing which was unholy to do, and would they not condemn him? It was all too much to bear for my sensitive master, and he fell ill. He was seized by a violent fever, and when Father Lucas came to visit him, he confessed what had happened. I was relieved, especially when I noticed that his uncle exhibited much concern for him and gave him the best of treatments. Then one night when he got better, I heard that in his sleep he muttered the name 'Flamma'. I was greatly shocked at this, because now my guilt was clear, and I would surely receive severe punishment in my next life. By thinking of Flamma and her dances and drifting towards the flame, I had reminded my master of the days gone by. He had remembered Flamma and had soiled his thoughts with sin, and it was all my fault and I would have to answer for it.

When my master had recovered I found that he neglected his prayers and refrained from prostrating himself before the image of the Lord Christ. I had made a great effort to grow again and soon I succeeded to reach my normal size. Then one day Father Lucas came and informed my master that he would be sent on his first journey now. I heard that such a journey was an honour and a promotion for any young monk. My master was to go in place of Father Lucas to Rome and deliver a sealed scroll to an important personage of the clergy there. The abbot was very kind to his nephew, my master. He equipped him in such manner befitting a monk who travels on official duty. He clothed him adequately, gave him a rich repast in his own rooms, instructed him, blessed him and sent him off. Oh how I rejoiced to leave the stuffy cell behind which was like a dreadful prison! We beards love nothing more than freedom. We love the fresh air, the skies, the wind and rain, the song of birds, the scent of flowers and above all we delight in cleanliness. I felt clean, as my master had taken a bath after years, which I heard was one of the luxuries of the world.

Arrived in Rome, I was surprised that my master went straight to the house where Flamma used to live with her people. But neither her people nor Flamma were to be seen. Different folks lived in the house, and we heard that twelve months ago Flamma's father had been asked to embrace Christianity. He had disobeyed, after which soldiers had come to drive him and his family from the city. He had killed one

of the soldiers, whereupon he and nearly all his people had been killed. Some of them had escaped, but no one knew where they had fled to.

On hearing this, my master sighed painfully. He then roamed through the town, most probably in search of Flamma, and I saw that the streets were very dirty, all the public baths had been demolished or closed and nearly all the inhabitants were either monks or nuns. My master did not think of delivering the sealed scroll, but he went out of the city along the country road. He walked for about an hour until I perceived a village in the distance. Presently there were shouts behind us. My master turned and saw a crowd of peasants running towards the village. In their hands they carried whips, spades, hatchets, knives and all kinds of country weapons. A young woman headed the rabble, holding up a crucifix crying: "Down with the Heathens!" A deformed, ugly man at her side, swaying a wooden cross, bellowed: "Down with the develish pagans!" The young woman was Flamma and in the deformed man I recognised the barber of her father. My master stepped aside to let the mob pass, and I felt the shock that ran through his body when he saw Flamma. They were making for the village like fanatics, and a beggar sitting by the road said: "There they go again out to destroy the Heathens in the village. There they go again, headed by the pious Flamma, the wife of the barber." At the last words my master staggered. Then he turned into a narrow path and swiftly walked towards the woods.

When he had reached a wilderness of trees, bushes and high ferns, he rested on the ground, breathing heavily. He took out the sealed scroll and tore it to shreds. I was shocked for I knew that now he could never return to the monastery and that he had broken his vows of celibacy, poverty and obedience. He uttered a shrill laughter and began to rave against the world and the Kingdom of Heaven. He cursed Father Lucas, cursed Flamma and Hypatia; he cursed the monastery, the monks and the chruch. He howled out that not Jesus Christus but that he was the son of God. He cried that he would sit by the side of God with Flamma. He cursed the barber that had stolen his love and shouted suddenly that the root of all evil is woman. By now I knew that my master was stark mad. The severe strain of monastic life, the hideous murder of Hypatia, the unfaithfulness of Flamma had unhinged his mind. Now I heard a rustling noise among the leaves. From beneath the brushwood crept a fairly large snake. It raised its head and seemed to look at my master defiantly. When he saw it, he jumped up and yelled: "There she is! The temptress Flamma! The she-devil! He rushed and trampled upon the snake, but he was bitten and after a few seconds he collapsed and died. Before I passed away too, I shook my head in horror. What an insane humanity it was! I looked at nature around. How sweet and fresh it was! Every creature had a mate, a home, a family, living in happiness doing its duty even without religion. It appeared to me almost as if religion was at the bottom of all the trouble in this world. It seemed to foster the snake

of cruelty, warping man's brain, filling it with ghosts and phantasmagorias, chasing him from one extreme to the other, bidding him now to live in pomp and luxury and now in poverty and filth. I wondered at the blindness of mankind, and wondered too what my next rebirth would bring me.

CHAPTER VI

Punishment and Pardon

Alas, my fears had come true! I was being punished for having caused the ruin of a saintly man, my former master. By drifting towards the dancing candle flame and by the flame getting hold of me, my master's beard, I had revived his memory of Flamma. I had turned him away from God and had caused him to go in search of Flamma. Yes, I was being punished as I saw that I had reverted. Once again I was reborn as the beard of a goat; a goat that had a kid and was being milked now and again. I had therefore not a master but a mistress. I had become the beard of a female animal.

The men who owned my mistress had quite a flock of goats all of which had kids. They had also a number of bucks with large horns and longer beards. I heard that all the beards of these goats had only one ambition, namely to become beards of men. Although I was anxious to regain my former status,

I did not care to be the beard of one of the owners of the flock, because their beards were unclean, since these men neither washed their faces nor their beards. They lived in wooden hovels with their wives and children. It seemed they were people who made their living by goat-breeding. They were uncouth wild peasants; and I heard from the beard of one of the goats who had been a long time here, that these rough men belonged to the race of 'Visigoths' and were called 'Barbarians' whose home was some where in Germany. I heard that they had invaded this country which was called Spain, and that these Visigoths were oppressing the inhabitants which were primitive Spaniards. I found that they were Christians as to the door of one of their hovels was nailed a wooden crucifix. And every where along the country roads where the flock grazed, I saw wooden niches, containing either the statue of the Virgin Maria or a crucified Christus. The hovels of the flock owners were not far from a town called 'Cordova'. The men drove their herd sometimes to the market there to sell the goats when the kids had grown big, but my mistress had never the good fortune to be bought by anyone.

The children of these peasants were running wild. They were extremely vulgar and teased the goats, rode on their backs and pulled them about by their beards. I lost bundles of hair owing to their rough treatment, aud often I feared they would pull out my roots. They however avoided the bucks because of their dangerous horns and their fighting spirit.

I had a very painful time but that was all part of the punishment for the sin I had committed in my last life.

The goat-owners were terribly brutal. They enslaved their women, beat them and ordered them about. Their leisure time they passed hunting, gambling and drinking. One day a band of soldiers appeared. They were on horseback and looked like the remnants of a defeated cavalry. They alighted and ordered the goat herds to give them food and drink. They were Visigoths too, but being soldiers the peasants were scared of them and ran like slaves to do their biddings.

After the meal the soldiers related some of their experiences. I heard that they belonged to the army of King Roderic who had been defeated and killed near Cadiz by one 'Tarik', a young Arab General who had invaded Spain. One of the soldiers said it had been a piece of roguery on the part of 'Witiza' to negotiate through Count Julian with Tarik who was then the Governor of all West Africa, and to ask him for help against King Roderic. Another soldier said it served Roderic right because he had dethroned Witiza who was after all the rightful King of Spain. For saying this he was rebuked by the rest of the soldiers who said the Arabs were no Christians but were unbelievers. They said their Prophet was a false one and their religion called 'Islam' was a hoax. On hearing that yet another religion had appeared on the scene, I got alarmed, as I was sure it would become the cause of more wars and cruelty.

It appeared that the soldiers had been a long time on the road as their uniforms were torn and dusty. They said that Tarik was advancing; that at first he had taken the great 'Rock' in the South of Spain and had named it 'Jebal-Tarik' which meant 'the Mountain of Tarik', and after defeating Roderic, had taken Ecija, and was moving on to Malaga. I may mention here that the name 'Jebal-Tarik' was corrupted by the Christians long afterwards into Gibralter.

We beards heard a lot of things from the soldiers. We also heard that this was the year 711 after the birth of the Lord Christus. The soldiers said the worst was that Tarik's superior 'Musa', the Governor of all Africa had come over as well, and the two of them would ere long conquer the whole of Spain. The soldiers then started abusing the Arabs in a foul manner, and after they had left, they were being abused in turn by the goatherds for they had asked them to hand over all the cash that was contained in their hovels.

After about a year, when I was still a goat's beard, I began to think that the story about Tarik must have been invented or else Tarik must have been defeated by the Visigoths, as all remained quiet and there was no sign of war. The goatherds themselves were ignorant of what was going on in the world as no news penetrated to them even had there been a war in other regions of the land. When the flock again was taken to the market in Cordova, I thought I heard

the name of Tarik and heard some excited talk; but I could not be sure and the goat breeders took no notice of it. It was only one morning when strange men on horseback appeared near their hovels that they realized that enemy was at hand. They fled in confusion and the goats ran away in all directions before the advancing steeds. My mistress, the goat, fell into a deep ditch and was not able to get out again. Then one of the riders stopped suddenly his steed, alighted and helped my mistress out of the ditch. He patted her gently and I heard him say: "Our Prophet says: 'Fear God in respect of animals for they will also be gathered to God'." I was struck hearing this. I remembered that Jesus Christ had said that the Kingdom of God belongs to children, and now I heard that even animals were permitted to enter there. I could see that these soldiers were, not Visigoths, but were belonging to Tarik's army.

That same night a crowd of bandits came and stole the goats for their own use. My mistress had the misfortune of being slaughtered to provide a meal for the vagabonds. Although I was sorry for her, I consoled myself when I remembered the words of the Arab soldier which had taught me that even the soul of a goat is of value in God's eyes and will not be lost.

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I was reborn there and then and was reborn as the beard of a man. These two facts proved that

I had been pardoned. Oh how happy I was! I promised myself never again to follow my own desires and get good people into trouble.

I was the beard of a young Arab Lieutenant in the Army of Tarik. I saw that my master was a very good friend of Tarik and I had an occasion to see this great general at close quarters. What a fine man he was! What fiery eyes he had, what noble countenance, and what gentle disposition, yet what great valour and courage he possessed! He was, no doubt, a master of strategy as later on I heard that no conqueror that had ever come near Spain had attached any importance to the great rock in the South of Spain, and that Tarik had been the first to recognize its strategic value. I saw soon that he was a conqueror who not only conquered cities but the hearts of the people of the cities too.

I knew that Cordova had been taken and now the Army was resting, being encamped some thirty miles from Toledo. I noticed that a prisoner was being tried. A man had been caught in the village nearby trying to slander Tarik by telling the people that he was a tyrant who tortured the captives and sold women and children into slavery. He had been caught red-handed and it did not help him to deny his guilt. I thought he would be killed for having soiled the good name of Tarik, who was known for his chivalry towards women and who loved children; but the culprit received only a number of stripes and a warning not to repeat the offence. My

master reproached Tarik for his leniency saying that if such lies were repeated often enough, they would become truths for the people and even get into history later on. But the general laughed and said it was sufficient that God knew the truth.

Tarik had a small, trimmed beard of dark brown colour that became him very much. My master had a larger beard and I found that all the Arab soldiers had beards, which they carefully tended and cleaned. They seemed to me the most clean people in the world. I admired these warriors. They wore no heavy armours and weapons. They were clad lightly and their highly trained steeds adjusted themselves to every one of their movements, so that warrior and steed became one, being a wonder of agility and grace. They flew along with the swiftness of birds. They turned twenty time before the clumsy unwieldy Visigoths could turn once. They had no other arms but reed lances and swords of lightest, finest steel with golden inscriptions from the Koran which was their holy Book. I heard that the name of the Prophet was 'Mohammad', that their religion was called 'Islam' and that all the followers of Islam were called Moslems. The Arabs were also called Saracens. And those of North Africa which were mixed, were called Moors or Berbers. These warriors were noble-looking men. They were tall, active, spirited, fair-skinned and often blue-eyed. Every warrior was an example of discipline, self-control and piety. They were kind and tolerant to the subdued nations and never had the world seen more compassionate

conquerors. Plunder was strictly forbidden, and for the first time in my lives I saw people who were in possession of great power and did not misuse it.

The wine-god Dionysus had gone with the Greek army of Alexander the Great. But I saw that strong intoxicating drinks were prohibited here and that none cared for them. Only 'Allah' which was the Arabic name for God, went with the army, and He alone could give success. There were no wild, inarticular shouts when a city was stormed or when the army went into battle. The only cry was "Allah Akbar!" which meant: "God is greater than man can either know or conceive." This was something entirely new to me; for although the Jews used to carry their holy book with themselves into battle and 'Jehova' went with them, their God was only the God of Israel and of no other nation, while here God was the God of every nation not only, but of all the earth and the heavens too.

When I noticed the respect that these warriors exhibited for women, I remembered the deplorable mentality of Aristotle, Tertullian and St. Jerome and their low opinion about women, which was shared by the Visigoths whose women were subject only to force. I heard also that according to Islam, no girl could be compelled to marry but she must be consulted first and give her consent to the marriage.

Although the Arabs kept slaves, I saw that they were treated like members of the family, and

the beard of Tarik, my friend, told me that if a man treated his slave harshly it was obligatory on him to free him afterwards. In fact, I saw that slaves often enjoyed greater confidence and kindness of their masters than members of their family. I heard also from my friend that Musa in jealousy of Tarik's successes had tried to recall him to Africa, but Tarik, not having completed his task in Spain, had not obeyed the call. Upon this Musa had come himself over and he had already conquered the cities of Seville, Carmona and Merida. From all this I gathered that Musa must be planning revenge. I heard that my master was of the same opinion and he tried to dissuade Tarik from rejoining Musa at Toledo, as he must have prepared a trap for him. But as usual Tarik laughed away his friend's fears and said what God did was best.

At sunset I heard the priest call for prayers. It was not really a priest. I had come to know that there was no priesthood in Islam. The man who called for prayers was a '*Muezzin*'.

Then all the soldiers, together with all their superiors and their general went to prostrate themselves before Allah. But I saw no altars, no images, no sacred fires. I heard no bells and no chanting of psalms, as I knew that the Moslems worship God only in spirit. They did not call God their 'Father', and although they highly respected and honoured the Lord Jesus Christ, they looked upon him as a Prophet and did not admit that he was the son of

God, because Mohammad had said that God had no sons and daughters. I heard that he had urged his followers to go in search of knowledge, and that the first message that he had received from God was: "Read!" and the second one was: "Write!" I remembered how ignorant the monks in Alexandria had been, and how anxiously the priests had kept all knowledge to themselves. I thought that perhaps the cruel murder of Hypatia would not have taken place had the monks been allowed to go in search of knowledge and collect some sense.

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Although Tarik's name at first terrified the Spaniards, who imagined him to be a fierce tyrant, the news of his excellent quality of tolerance and the gallantry of his army spread far and wide and the people rejoiced in the idea that at last the liberators had come that would release them from the scourge of the Visigoths. The people found that Tarik was the most merciful conqueror who would not permit a soul to be molested; who settled their everlasting brawls and quarrels and made them live in peace. Plunder was strictly prohibited. The customs of the people were not interfered with. Jews and Christians were allowed to govern themselves, and I heard that their religions were not only tolerated, but respected. I heard that the Christian slaves who were condemned to servitude for all their lives, thanked God for the new rulers, for now they need but go to any Moslem of importance and repeat:

"There is no god but God, and Mohammad is His Prophet," and they were free. Indeed, I thought Tarik must have appeared to those poor persecuted and oppressed people like an angel from heaven, sent by God to save them, as the Christian Priests had not tried to make the slaves realize that Christ was their Saviour.

In their hearts the Saracens despised the Christians because of their vulgar manners, their lawlessness and mainly for the dirt with which they surrounded themselves. Their want of cleanliness surprised me as I did not think that there were any instructions in the Bible that told them not to wash themselves. On the contrary, I knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had washed the feet of his disciples not only as a sign of humility but also to emphasize the need of cleanliness. I knew not why it was that his followers should do the reverse of everything that he had counselled. I kept on thinking about this and I found that the first Christian converts in Rome must have hated the sight of any bath, as they saw that the profuse cleaning, perfuming and adorning of the body gave rise to nothing but immorality and sin. May be that the hugging of dirt and the neglect of the body was a reaction of all that had been going on in Rome before the arrival of Christianity.

When Tarik and his friend, my master, sat together talking, I often related to Tarik's beard what terrible times I had seen in my last lives, and I was surprised to hear that he too had seen Nero's misdeeds as he used to be the beard of a poor

labourer in Rome at that time. He as well as I, we both were blessing the people who were the followers of Islam, as we heard that according to Islam no woman must be ill-treated and that women had equal rights to those of men. We both thought that the sufferings of women had come to an end and the snake of cruelty in general had been killed, especially when we heard that nowhere blood must be shed except on the battle-field and that also only when of utmost necessity.

At length, Tarik after all rejoined his superior Musa at Toledo, and the first thing that this ambitious man did, was to throw Tarik into prison for not having obeyed his call. My master was shocked at this violence and he prayed for his friend's release. His prayers were heard, as when the Cailph Walid at Damascus heard of Tarik's humilation "he ordered that he should be set at liberty and restored to his command. The two conquerors then shared the country between them and, in less than six years all Spain was subdued to the very foot of the Pyrenees."

But I heard that the Caliph feared the ambitious character of Musa and thought he might make an attempt to declare his independence. He therefore recalled him to Damascus. Without the consent of the Caliph, Musa then appointed his son Abd-al-Aziz Governor of Spain and set out for Damascus accompanied by Tarik and his friend, my master, who could not be separated from him.

On their arrival in Damascus they heard that the Caliph Walid had died and his brother Suleman had taken his place. Musa was roughly handled by this new Caliph. Forgetting what services he had rendered to the Caliphate, Suleman accused him of peculation and he was beaten severely with rods and fined 100,000 pieces of gold. But I saw that the Caliph was bent on humilating Musa still more. He had his son beheaded in Spain. His head was brought to Damascus and shown to Musa who died soon after he had seen this extraordinary piece of cruelty. Here, I heard as well that at the time Tarik invaded Spain a young general of barely eighteen years with name of Mohammad Ibn-al-Qasim, another genius of strategy and statemanship, had been sent to invade a country called India. He had subdued the whole province of Sind, proving an excellent administrator; when he was recalled, thrown into prison and tortured to death by his jealous enemies, for all the services he had rendered! This villany reminded me of Alexander the Great who, jealous of his friend and general Philotas had him tortured to death. I was certain now that the snake of cruelty had not only *not* died among the moslems, as I had thought, but was showing a terrible front spitting its venom right and left. I found also that here and there women were ill-treated by their husbands and dwelt in seclusion whereas Islam had not given such instructions. I remembered again Christ's words: "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things I say?" It seemed to me that the finest teachings of a Prophet could only be followed by those who were noble by

birth and that even education could not achieve wonders for those who lacked the soil that could develop flowers of culture from the seeds of the teachings of the masters. The word of God in its most convincing shape could never improve an apostle of hell. Therefore the snake of cruelty could only be lulled to sleep periodically, but could never be killed.

While Musa had received 'Punishment', Tarik obtained 'Pardon' for the crime he had never committed. This pardon took the shape of dismissal from service. He returned to Spain with his friend, my master. He had made his home in Seville where he dwelt among his dear ones in peace and great happiness. I can never forget the days when he sat with his friend, my master, beneath the shade of the fragrant orange trees in his garden and I listened to their lofty inspiring talk.

Long after, when my master died mourned by Tarik, and when I had to die as well, I found it harder to part from Tarik than my master, and in all my future lives the noble Tarik existed and will ever exist in my heart as Tarik, the Great.

CHAPTER VII

Paradise

We Beards are more priviledged than our masters for we are able to remember our previous lives. Consequently we are truthful historians. Receiving first hand information and actually experiencing what happened, we are able to judge afterwards in the coming centuries whether historical events in books are false or true. Man cannot remember his previous lives. He is ignorant of what happened in past centuries and cannot rely upon what is recorded by historians who may have been influenced by political and religious bias and may have treated the characters of historical persons according to that. I say this because I was reborn in the 10th century in the town of "Cordova' in the province 'Andalusia' of Spain, the same land which had been conquered by the General Tarik, and I had an occasion to gaze at the manuscript of a young christian historian who had written about the Gothic King 'Roderic' and had raised him to a great virtuous Hero, only because

he had been his co-religionist, and had described Tarik as a savage Tyrant. But it is precisely the same with some muslim historians, who are riddled with prejudices and inclined to be fanatics. I overheard a conversation of such a man with my master and heard that he said that all christians without exception were hating the muslims because they were beset with cruelty and intolerance towards all non-muslims, a thing which is an entirely false statement.

My master was a young muslim poet, and such a genius he was that the Caliph Abd-ur-Rahman III often called him to his palace to delight in the recitations of his poetry. He had a sister whose name was 'Laila'. She was an extraordinary gifted and beautiful girl; a clever musician, a poet and although very young she was well versed in philosophy and it was a great pleasure for my master and his friends, as well as for me, poor Beard, to listen to her discourses.

Among the friends of my master were many christians and Jews. One of them, a young christian was a poet too, but his poetry lacked the music and the richness of idea that one could find in my master's poetry. My master instructed him, and the young christian 'Antonio' was eager to learn and improve his writings. He had a blonde, small beard who was an intimate friend of mine. He told me in Beard-language many secrets of his master. He said Antonio had loved a girl named 'Floretta' some years ago, but had given her up because of her hatred for

the muslim conquerors, and also because he had seen Laila and had fallen in love with her beauty, her gifts and her wonderful character. An old monk called 'Peter' was Floretta's friend and she was greatly influenced by him. Antonio had neither father nor mother, but he lived with his wealthy aunt who, like Floretta found fault with him for admiring everything that was muslim. He and my master were really faithful friends, and they were almost always in each other's company. Laila was often present, and I could see by her blushings that she too was in love with handsome Antonio. I heard that according to the 'Koran' no objections were raised to marriages between muslims and christians, yet I wondered why Antonio being such an admirer of Islam did not embrace the muslim faith. I guessed that it would have excited the wrath of his aunt and the clergy; but I thought he should not have minded this. I soon found that not only he but the majority of young christians were admirers of their muslim rulers. It seemed to me that the Spaniards had come to realize what a blessing the Moors had brought to them as the land had been on the verge of destruction by the tyranny of the Visigoths at first, and afterwards by the warring crowds of chiefs of many different races. By the christians of the North and the jealous Muslim Chiefs themselves, such as the 'Fatimites' of Africa. I heard that it was owing to the genius of Abd-ur-Rahman III that Spain had been united and peace had been restored. I heard it say that his achievements were nothing short of the miraculous. The report said that: "He had saved

Andalusia both from itself and from foreign rule. He had given to it internal order and prosperity and the consideration and respect of foreigners. He found the treasury empty. He left it in the most flourishing condition. The condition of the country was equally prosperous. Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, the arts and sciences flourished together. The foreigner was lost in wonder at the scientific system of irrigation which gave fertility to lands that appeared most unpromising. He was struck by the perfect order which, thanks to a vigilant police, reigned in the most inaccessible districts. Commerce had developed to such an extent, that, according to the superintendent of the customs, the duties on imports and exports constituted the most considerable part of the revenue. A superb Navy enabled Abd-ur-Rahman to dispute with the Fatimites the Empire of the Mediterranean, and secure him by the possession of 'Centa' the key of Mauretania. A numerous and well disciplined army, the best in the world, gave him, a preponderance over the christians of the North. The most haughty sovereigns were eager for his alliance. Ambassadors were sent to him by Emperors of Constantinople and by the Sovereigns of Germany, Italy and France." Indeed I heard it say that "the world wondered at this spectacle of *Might*, *Culture* and *Peace*." I had seen in my previous lives that whosoever was in possession of *power*, misused it, and here for the first time I beheld the greatest power coupled with gentle tolerance and *peace*. I had seen what Alexander the Great could do with the power that God had given him. He used it as a tool to create hell for

the people that he conquered, while in Abd-ur-Rahman's hand this same tool of power created a veritable Paradise for all people that he conquered. Often my master said to Antonio that the Moorish Civilization was the very grandest and most amazing phenomenon the world had ever seen and ever would see. A manifestation of life in its most powerful and perfect form, possessing a balance, a purity and unity that was altogether unique, a triumph of correct understanding of the importance of the true values of the meanest things existing in the universe, and an intense desire to preserve and develop these values. Antonio agreed with everything my master said. He admitted that Andalusia had never been ruled so wisely and justly, and he said he wondered how a people almost straight from the desert could be in possession of so much knowledge and of such a glorious gift of administration which neither the Greeks nor Romans or anyother nation before had possessed. My master laughed and asked him to study the 'Koran' carefully which would solve the problem for him and show him that this Civilization was possible only because its leaders and its muslim population were acting in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Holy Prophet, the spirit of which they had thoroughly understood.

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I heard it say that all people of every creed and colour high and low that were ruled by the Caliph, were allowed to practise their own religions and customs, develop their own characteristic traits

and pursue their own ideals with one common cultural centre that they looked up to; could appeal to when in trouble; round which they gathered to learn and progress each on its own chosen way without hindrance. No wonder that in time they no longer cared to have any other form of Government. They had freedom, instruction, justice and help in every way and I myself heard that they were loud in their praises for their Moorish rulers. Only the Christian clergy looked with alarm at the state of things, as while before the arrival of these tolerant conquerors the people heard nothing but church hymns and rough cries of war, now they heard emotional songs and sweet music. Romance had entered their world. Chivalry, respect and praise for women had supplanted the brutal treatment of the weaker sex. The Christian youths discarded the church hymns and were no longer anxious to show the world that they were Christians. They learned the Arabic language and I heard that they began to write stories in that language which were in the style of the delightful adventures one finds in the 'Arabian Nights'. They were free to worship whom, where and when they liked. They also were free to trade and become wealthy. They liked their gentle governors and imitated them in every way. They adopted their dress, their customs, their behaviour, their poetry and their search for knowledge. I heard that the Christian Priests beheld all this with great anxiety. They urged the people to look upon Moorish refinement and learning with disgust. I saw that many martyrs arose. The very

mildness of the Muslim rule exasperated them. Life to these ascetics meant suffering, scourges and prayer. Suicides became common, and I heard my master say that these Spanish martyrs were acting like insane creatures for they mutilated and stabbed themselves without any reason whatsoever. They were nor persecuted by anyone but were well looked after and cared for. Inspite of all that they went before the '*Kadi*' or (judge) abusing his religion with a desire to be thrown into prison and become martyrs.

But the judges turned deaf ear to them as they did not wish to hurt or punish these hysterical people who evidently suffered from some disease. I heard that Floretta was amongst those whose hearts were over-flowing with religious hysteria. She ran to judges and other officials of the Government and used abusive language, crying that the Christian religion was the only true one. I heard that Antonio contacted her and asked her to be sensible; but she behaved disgracefully and reviled him accusing him of his love for Laila. Her protector, the monk Peter, tried to persuade Antonio to return to the 'Flock', but he did not listen; he left him and came away to report to my master what had transpired. Soon it looked like some kind of civil war, the priest-ridden population rising in rebellion against the Spanish multitudes that had forsaken the Church and were fast becoming Muslims. The Government had to interefere and separate the two hostile camps. The fanatic Christians were warned that they would be severly punished if they continued to attack peaceful and law-abiding

citizens. They paid no heed to this and I heard that they were roughly handled by the law whereupon they shouted from the house top that they were being persecuted by the intolerant Moors. This was taken up by historians afterwards and gave rise to the *Myth* of Muslim intolerance.

While Floretta was tearing her garments, beating her breast and cursing the 'Infidels', Laila was partner of a Lady who had a school for young maidens that were taught mathematics, science, history, botany and art. Their ambition was to become fit companions and help-mates to their husbands, to acquire equal knowledge and play their dutyful parts in a human society that wished to go forward on the right path of destiny. I saw that women were treated on an equality with men. They really were respected above men. I first wondered at this; but it was soon explained to me when my master one day said to Antonio that the Prophet had said: "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers." He pointed out that the muslims looked upon woman as the element of guidance and instruction of the future generations that furnish the bricks wherewith to build up a great nation. Her person therefore was sacred, said my master and must be respected. I saw that women freely associated with men and they discussed with them music, science and art, being treated by them with utmost chivalry as though they were the wealth by which alone a country could prosper. But the fathers of the Church were blind to the wonderland which the Moors had created for them, and I

remembered a proverb I had heard which says: "Ungratefulness is the reward of the world." And indeed how ungrateful these Spaniards were. In my previous life when I had been reborn as a goat's Beard among the Gothic goatherds, I had seen that the Spaniards were mere aboriginals at that time, living in wooden huts. Their language was unformed; they could neither read nor write; they lived in dirt, fighting each other like wild beasts; a lawless rabble that made slaves of their women folk; steeped in ignorance with a Christianity that had sunk to mere gross superstition and idolatry. And for having been rescued from this mire in which they choked, by the gentle generous Moors, they cursed their saviours and kicked away the paradise that they had bestowed upon them.

Antonio's Beard often discussed with me the strange mentality of these Christians and he himself wondered why his master did not embrace Islam like so many thousands had done; especially when his devotion for my master and his love for Laila were so great. With what a zest he listened when my master spoke of the rulers that had lived before Abd-ur-Rahman III. When he praised Abd-ur-Rahman the I, who had started the gigantic task of the great mosque of Cordova. I heard that the ruler worked at the mosque with his own hands. I heard that 'Hashem' and afterwards 'Hakem' continued the work of the mosque which I had seen when my master went there, the magnificence of which each time thrilled me with some kind of ecstasy, for

its beauty was such that one might truly find it only in paradise but not on earth. The mosque was called 'The Aljamia'. It had nineteen doors with lovely lattice work over them. "From each of these doors extended an avenue of pillars in the direction of Mecca so that there were nineteen large avenues or aisles and thirty-eight smaller ones between them. The effect of the maze of columns was as beautiful as it was strange. Above these was a wonderful edifice of carpentry in odoriferous woods supporting a dome crowned by a golden pomegranate outside. Within hung four thousand six hundred silver chains supporting lamps of silver, and under the dome was the Caliph's pulpit, a kind of platform on four marble columns. The walls were inlaid with gold letters with verses of the Koran, the Arabic lettering so encrusted with crystals that the characters looked like letters of light. Most of the columns were made of jasper and marble." This report I heard for, poor Beard that I was, I could never have observed all these details myself. I heard that: "It was the Moor who discovered the art of preserving colours and rendering his embeshments imperishable." Yes, I heard and saw so many things that I felt I should have a million eyes and ears to take them all in during this one life.

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I heard that there were 5000 wonderful palaces and 900 public baths in Cordova alone and that "a miraculous aqueduct brought pure water from the mountains. It was collected in a large reservoir. In

this stood the image of a lion covered with gold with jewels for eyes. The water entered the lion's hind part and gushed from his mouth, and the overflow poured into the river quadalyuivir."

One day my master told Antonio about the great musician 'Ziryab', who when on his way to Cordova was met by the ruler half way with royal pomp and honours. I heard that Ziryab composed music and poetry; but he had also invented a new way of making linen white. He invented crystalware and leather-beds. He cured his music-pupils of stammering and he was arbiter of fashion in general. I heard that he introduced force-meat balls and a dish that was long afterwards known as 'Ziryab's Fricassee'. He made people drink from glass vessels instead of metal and a host of other refinements he introduced. Whatever he prescribed the fashionable world followed, as it was always necessary and charming. Among other things he introduced 'Asparagus' into Andalusia. My master had a large plot of Asparagus in his lovely garden. He looked after them himself. He also cultivated beautiful flowers. Not he alone; but every muslim was a gardener. Even kings themselves were digging, planting and sowing and I heard that the motto of the Arab land-owner was: "He who planteth and soweth and maketh the earth bring forth fruit and flowers, has done alms that shall be reckoned to him in heaven." The province Andalusia looked indeed like a "highly cultivated farm," as I had heard it say. Many plants were introduced by the Caliphs from

the East and Africa which afterwards found homes in all the gardens in Europe. Other plants that were brought to Spain were Rice, Sugarcane, Saffron, Mulberry trees, ginger and myrrh. Bananas and dates too, and the artichokes and cotton-plants were studied, botany being highly developed. The jews and Arab physicians worked together. Surgeons made great discoveries.

I remember that one day a man entered my master's garden and carried away many of the Asparagus. The thief was caught and handed over to the law. The punishment for theft was the loss of one hand or even both hands. But this was hardly ever applied, because muslim law acted according to the motive of the crime. In this case of Asparagus the theif was a poor but honest man. I heard his wife was pregnant and was suddenly seized with a violent desire for Asparagus. Not receiving them she fainted away and seemed in a dangerous condition. The anxious husband ran for the doctor but found him out. He hurried to the market; but the last Asparagus had just been sold. Passing my master's garden, he perceived through an opening in the wall the delicate feather-like leaves of Asparagus. He knew them well and urged by a sudden impulse he entered the garden with great difficulty and pulled out as many Asparagus as he could carry. This story proved to be true and the despair of the man being taken into account and seeing that he was *repenting* his act, he was excused, because as I heard, the Koran said the criminal should receive mercy if he repents. My master sent

many Asparagus to the ailing wife of the man. At this occasion I saw that there were fine law courts in Cordova and competent lawyers who were called by the Arabic name '*Vakeel*'. It was mostly by clever cross examination of the accused and the witnesses that the truth was found, as the application of torture in order to extract confession was strictly prohibited. I heard that the unfaithful wife was not put to death; but she received a hundred mild lashes, such as could not endanger her life, and that also only when four other persons had seen the act of adultery. I found that even here the equality of man and woman was emphasized for when a husband accused his wife of adultery and could not prove it, he himself received the hundred lashes and his evidence was never more believed hereafter. Hearing and seeing all this, I remembered Alexander the Great whose 'great' hobby it was to torture not only his enemies but his best friends to death. I remembered the cruel treatment of Greek and Roman women who were often put to death for small crimes, leave alone adultery. I thought of the Christians who had adopted Roman law and looked upon wives and children as slaves, having power of life and death over them. I had to admit that Islam had raised the status of woman almost above that of man, and, as my master said, women and men were free to do what they liked and were kings and queens in their own rights.

I could see that Islam had destroyed the snake of cruelty so far and had established that state of

Love and Peace which Christ had preached in vain for his followers did the contrary of what he wanted them to do. My master said, that they shut themselves up in monasteries and nunneries, doing penance, neglecting the duties that this life demanded from them, neglecting cleanliness and hindering humanity in its progress. Christ gave them no such examples. He freely roamed about in woods and fields, admiring natural beauty and praising the loveliness of the lilies of the field. His garments were always scrupulously clean, nor had he a low opinion about woman as the rest of his country-men had. He instructed 'Magdalene' and raised her to the heights of purity and it follows automatically that purity should be respected. But pure or not pure, the followers of Christ looked upon woman as the agent of the devil and made her a beast of burden. Nor did Christ suggest that the adulteress should be killed as the law of his country demanded. On the contrary, he asked those who condemned her whether any of them was so free from sin as to throw the first stone at her. Moreover he had said: "Thou shalt not judge," and according to that the adulteress should be left alone. But none of those who called themselves Christians adhered to the teachings of Christ, but they would rather practise what the Greeks and Romans had taught them, and that was because they had entirely misunderstood Christ's message. My master said Islam had come to clear up these misunderstandings and indeed, I saw myself that the Moors had come with pick axes, spades, brooms,

dusters, to sweep away the rubbish mire and muck beneath which the true spirit of Christianity lay buried, to dig and excavate all true values they had come, as I saw that everywhere *excavations* in so many different forms were being carried on.

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Yes, excavations and excavations everywhere! No stone was left unturned in this great Moorish search for knowledge and value. Everything was made use of and developed into higher worth if possible. I heard my master say to Antonio that posterity would never be able to know Plato and Aristotle had not the Koran enjoined the search for knowledge. It was owing to this that the Moors ransacked old cellars and subterranean vaults, unearthing Greek and Roman art and philosophy giving them to the world. All that lay buried experienced a resurrection. The Moors did not only carry their spades to Greece and Rome, but to all parts of the world, ever digging and excavating ever searching and re-searching. I saw that they put together the pieces of what had been destroyed, making whole again all that lay scattered and wasted condemned as valueless rubbish. When I look back now, I do realize that these excavations and the frantic search for knowledge initiated by the Muslims were carried on by the Christians many centuries later in the age of what was called the 'Renaissance.' I am only a Beard, but owing to the many lives I have lived I have gathered some experience and have learnt enough so as to be able to form my own opinions about historical events. It seems to me

that like the seed of a flower is carried by the wind from one place to another to take root, so all that which the Moorish Civilization had expressed and formed for six or seven centuries had been carried by the current of evolution to Italy and had burst forth in shape of what is called the 'Renaissance' now. It was the same growth, but owing to different environments and religion it had assumed different shape and colouring. When I was reborn in Italy in the fifteenth century, I heard people reciting the same romantic poetry and heard them relate similar stories as those I had heard in Cordova. And when I saw the paintings of the masters I thought they had the same expression of balance and unity that my master had so often mentioned in connection with the wonderful mosque of Cordova. Although the subject was different, the quality of Art seemed the same, and I realized that all what I saw here was nothing but a resurrection of Moorish Civilization in a different shape. I then noticed that the Christians went about with spades digging and excavating as the Moors had done although they were continuously checked by the clergy who condemned the search for knowledge. I saw that unconsciously the Christians had adopted Moorish culture although they denied it perpetually and hated it.

My master went often to the Caliph's library with Antonio where was stored all the vast result of the Moorish search for knowledge. Learned men had free access to this library who after having gathered information imparted it to others enthusiastically.

No man who had original ideas kept them to himself but was anxious to hand them on so that others might benefit by it. No man who had learnt a craft tried to prevent others from acquiring it, but went out to teach it to the meanest. I saw that the Arabs had learnt the Art of paper-making and the catalogue of the books of the library was in forty-four volumes of fifty folios containing the biography and genealogy of every author.

Each time my master went to the bazaar, I was amazed to see that even the minds of the shop-keepers were visited by paradise. Wherever I looked I found utmost cleanliness; I found gentleness, sympathy, chivalry, service. Every shop-keeper was at the same time a poet, a writer, a botanist, a philosopher or even a mathematician. Everyman seemed endowed by nature with manifold gifts. You could hear a carpenter play a sweet melody on an instrument and recite his own poetry and afterwards discuss astronomy with a customer. There was 'fair play' everywhere. The measure was generous and the prices were low. Strict honesty dwelt among the merchants.

I saw that I had been reborn in a wonderland where the king might become a boot-maker and the boot-maker a king sometimes. I saw also many hospitals and houses for poor and disabled people. Begging was not allowed. No beggar was to be seen and the old people who could work no longer received pension for the rest of their days. No one must go hungry. Everyone was fed and received clothing and

shelter, and I heard my master say to a Jewish friend of his that whatever civilization would follow hereafter, irrespective of differenc of creed and customs, that was based on '*Human Rights*' was an off-shoot of the Moorish Civilization, as it was the first time in history that a state was based on the principle of Human Rights where men and women were equal, free responsible agents, were their own masters and fully equipped to form their own destiny.

Antonio who knew how to write and read the Arabian language often listened with devotion when my master read passages from the Koran, and then I too listened and heard words like the following:

"*Free the Slaves; Think and Reflect on the Creation of the Heavens and the Earth;*" and I heard that the Koran never addressed *Man alone*, but always said; '*Oh ye believing men and ye believing women*'.

Never before had such words been uttered by any Prophet of any people in the world, and I began to realize that the freedom of man, the intellectual enlightenment, and the equality of man and woman that had visited a world that was plunged into slavery, ignorance and the idea of inferiority of women, was caused by the *Advent of Islam.*

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Antonio listened attentively to everything that my master said, and whatever he admired and thought to be of importance to him he wrote in a note-book. He took such note-books with himself

wherever he went to enter many things that he heard from prominent members of the Moorish Society. He had lots of friends, mostly, Muslims among which were highly placed officials, administrators, scientists, philosophers and learned men who were adapts 'in interpreting the meanings of passages in the Koran. Antonio's Beard, my friend, told me in beard language that his master had collected a great number of note-books in his house, the contents of which he had transferred to large files so that the store of information he had gathered amounted to many volumes. I thought his effort was very praiseworthy and I believed he had acquired the Muslim habit of going in search of knowledge. Wherever he went he was received with great kindness and friendliness, as the Muslim world looked upon him as one of those Christians who, sick of the despotic ways of the clergy, had dropped their religion and were Muslims at heart. Responsible Muslim officials often confided in him, explaining to him matters of the state that they would not have done in case of staunch Christians.

A great *munazrah* had been arranged at Court. A brilliant gathering of scientists, philosophers, poets and musicians that came to vie with each other in the presence of the nobles of the court and the Caliph himself. Antonio had informed my master that after the *munazrah* he would embrace Islam formally and don the Moorish dress which up to now he had never worn. My master had often attended the *munazrahs* with Antonio and Laila, and several times

had been rewarded generously for the excellence of his poetry. Laila had also won prizes for her musical performances and such prizes ran often into fortunes, Palaces and whole Estates. At such assemblies I saw that Christians and Jews and men and women of all races and creeds were freely admitted. Travellers vied with each other in relating their adventures and showing the strange things they had brought from foreign countries. Story tellers tried to out-do each other with wit and anecdotes and descriptions of heroic deeds of courage and generosity. Poets fought battles with weapons of poetry. Arguments on abstract and mystic subjects were held, and it was surprising to see what great law and order prevailed inspite of all the freedom, and with what patience the Caliph bore the sometimes real offending jests of the Court-jester and even rewarded him generously for original sarcastic remarks that were aimed at the Caliph himself.

I heard that the Arabian Philosopher at Faraby was to be present. He had written a large work on the elements of music and had invented Arabic Musical writings and notes and more than fifty musical instruments. He had written on composition and on the art of singing. I heard that he would be present to meet a challenge of a prince, a great musician, who had sent his challenge in shape of a long poem. I saw a most picturesque concourse of people that proceeded to the Caliph's palace. Laila had accompanied my master and Antonio. But when we approached the palace gate a girl rushed forward

and flung herself at Antonio's feet. It was Floretta. She sobbed hysterically and tried to prevent Antonio from entering the palace. She had heard of Antonio's intention to embrace Islam and with intense agony she entreated him to refrain from forsaking his faith, and as Antonio paid no heed to her, she produced a knife and stabbed herself. Antonio was greatly shocked and the people rushed to her assistance. There was confusion and excitement. She was dying and as Antonio bent over her, she whispered something to him that I could not catch. At that moment a tall sinister-looking man who had just arrived on the scene lifted her from the ground and carried her away. I had seen this man in her company before. I knew he was the slave of a rich noble man who was a Christian Fanatic.

Antonio was not able to attend the *munazrah* and seeing him upset, my master and Laila took him to their house where they sat with him in the garden. Here, the beard of Antonio told me what Floretta had whispered. She had charged Antonio with the task of making Christianity strong and great. She asked him to take all his experiences of the Muslim community to the secret Brotherhood of the monk Petro so that he could make use of it for the development of Christianity. Later on I heard from his beard that Antonio had taken all the volumes of his notes to the secret society of monk Petro. It seemed as if with this act he had done his duty towards Christianity and was now longing to perpetuate his own happiness which was union with Laila. He embraced

Islam and wedded the beautiful damsel. After that the happy couple left for Damascus.

One evening, at sunset when the air was sweet with fragrance of spring flowers, my master walked in his garden. At the call of Mayor he went to an open Grass plot to prostrate himself. As he was praying I heard some one coming from behind. The next moment my master was stabbed in his back, and as he fell on his side, I beheld the slave of the fanatic nobleman. Dying my master smiled and said: "How I thank thee God that I am privileged to die the same way as our beloved Omer." I felt very sad and I wondered at fate's strange ways. I wished I would be reborn in this land again to continue my experiences of Paradise.

CHAPTER VIII

Paradise Lost

I was overjoyed to see that I was reborn in Spain in the same town, namely, my dear Cordova. I thought now I would enjoy more of the Paradise, and I looked around to take in all the beauty I had seen in my last life. But I was shocked to find that a great change had taken place. I was the beard of a young Jewish trader who lived with his father and mother in a dilapidated dark house at the extreme end of the town. The town itself looked forsaken and neglected. I heard that this was the 15th century. I heard that the Moors had been driven out or killed by the Christians who were in power now, and that the Jews were being persecuted. The mother of my master lay ill in a gloomy bedroom with the windows heavily curtained. I heard that she was sick owing to grief and fear. Sometimes when my master brought her food, she set up with a scream and cried: "They are coming! They are coming to burn us." I was quite horrified to hear this and I wished I had not been reborn in this century.

Evidently the Moors had lost their Paradise completely, and I was anxious to know what could have caused their fall. I noticed that my master did not ply his trade any longer; but sometimes he went out at night to visit some Jewish friends of his. On such occasions he wore a disguise and I kept my ears and eyes open to find out what was going on. I found the streets unswept and unclean. I saw that the mosques had been demolished or closed, and the numberless manuscripts, that had been collected with much trouble during centuries were being burnt by the ruthless clergy. I heard that those Spaniards who had embraced Islam were beaten and tortured and compelled to re-convert themselves. They were called 'infidels' and forced to wear the Christian dress, to give up the Arabic language and their Arabic names; to give up bathing and surround themselves with the dirt of their rulers. To adopt the Spanish language and call themselves not Moors but Spaniards. Looking round I could no longer see the charming Moorish dress, but only hats and breeches. I saw mostly soldiers or else monks and nuns. From the conversations of my master with his Jewish friends, I gathered that the wonderful 'Al Zohra' Palace and the great Library of Abd-ur-Rahman had been destroyed and plundered. I saw that there was a famine in the town because with the Moors all the irrigation had disappeared. The Christians did not bother to look after agriculture. They neglected everything and desolate tracts of land were the result. In my last life I had seen that those tracts had been

green and well looked after. Vines and olives and golden corn had grown there in abundance. The wonderful irrigation system of the Moors was ignored and never used. The fertile land had become dry and barren. I heard that the Christians suffered from boundless conceit; they despised any sort of labour and it was either war or the Church for them. I heard that the 900 beautiful baths had been destroyed as useless and that palaces and colleges had been pulled down. Not only had the light of learning forsaken Cordova, but trade as well had gone. I could hardly believe it when I heard that the Spaniard Christians were not able to make harnesses and that they appealed to the authorities to allow a few aged Moors to stay for the sake of harnessmaking. I heard that the forests which the Moors had planted had been felled for firewood. I saw for myself that the cattle looked starved and that the graceful, spirited Arab horses had disappeared and in their place I beheld underfed, dejected animals. I heard that the inhabitants had dwindled to 35,000, whereas in the time of the Moors it had been 3,00,000. All the factories famous for silks and superb cloth had gone and nothing was manufactured but hats and ribbons.

I had heard in my last life that a girl had to be consulted before marriage for this had been enjoined by the Prophet of Islam. I had seen that no Muslim girl was being married against her will. Christians however practised their own law then and the girl was disposed of even if she protested. I noticed that now the position of women had become

tragic, as the Moor was no longer here to look with contempt at Christian Barbarity, and I heard that a girl could be imprisoned, starved, beaten mercilessly until she consented to marry a certain man. There was no legal protection for her. She was a miserable slave, same as she had been in Greece and Rome, and I saw that the snake of cruelty was being fed and nursed carefully and I expected to see very soon a 'Hydra' with hundreds of hideous heads.

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The father of my master had been a pearl merchant but when he retired he gave himself to the study of Philosophy. He possessed many old books written by Moorish Philosophers which he valued very much. As the persecution of the Jews grew worse he never moved out and passed his life in a dark, little room among his books. My master had adopted the Christian dress and so had his mother. They had also changed their names. The mother, who used to be called 'Rebecca', was now 'Julia' and my master, whose original name was 'Isaak', became 'Carlos'. But his father, the old Philosopher refused to change his dress or his name. He still wore the broad belt round his waist and the long Jewish mantle and cap. I was a Beard only two inches long, and my master trimmed me very carefully, so as to avoid a Jewish appearance. But his fathers's Beard was the type worn by the Palestinian Jews: a flowing, long, broad beard flourishing in freedom and happiness. It was silver-white and I looked upon this Beard as my father because since my master was the son of the old Philosopher, I felt

that I was the son of the old Philosopher's beard. It was a very venerable, wise old Beard and he told me so many things that I found it difficult to store them all in my timid Beard-brain. He said that the new rulers of Spain were Fernando and Isabel, a fanatic despotic couple who were out to destroy everyone whose faith deviated from their own in the slightest degree. He told me that a system called 'The Inquisition' had been founded by them which empowered them, with Permission of Pope Sixtus, to appoint three Inquisitors.

These Inquisitors were churchmen and it was their business to enquire into the faith of every individual in the country and find out those who were Heretics or suspected of Heresy, and hand them over to the state for trial, as the right of directing the operation of the tribunal was reserved to the Crown. My father-Beard said that an infamous man called 'Juan de Torquemada' had been made the head of this terrible Inquisition. He was a Spanish Cardinal and formerly had been Bishop of Palestine, and I heard that during his office as director of the Inquisition he caused 9000 persons to be burned alive at the stake, most of them Jews. I shuddered when I heard this and I was certain that the cruelest Greek or Roman Pagans could have never gone so far. Then I heard that not even the Christians themselves were safe from the fury of Fernando and Isabel. Those who were rich and influential were simply accused of Heresy: their possessions were confiscated and they were thrown into prison and

tortured until more dead than alive they confessed anything they were asked. I heard that the Inquisition had become a matter of policy and a source of revenue to swell the Coffers of the Crown and the greedy clergy. Any powerful, noble family was accused of Heresy and destroyed. I heard that the Catholic Kings had given a pledge of tolerance to the conquered Moors and then had miserably violated that pledge. Tolerance was looked upon as a great sin.

Sometimes a guest came in the middle of the night and my master took him to the small dark room of his father, the Philosopher. The guest wore Christian attire, but I heard soon that he was the brother of the old Philosopher who lived in a distant village. He brought all sorts of informations and then the two brothers and my master sat by the dim light of a candle and made plans. I heard that the family was planning to escape as soon as Rebecca had recovered from her illness and was able to travel. The family then would manage to get across the Spanish border into France, for safety with the help of a Frenchman of Jewish descent who was a great friend of the brother of the old Philosopher. My father-Beard dreaded that day for it meant that he would be cut off completely, and for an old, conservative Jewish Beard this was not only loss of freedom, but an utter loss of self-respect and a great disgrace. But I consoled him saying that he would be able to grow again after the escape had been effected.

One day I asked him why the glorious civilization of the Moors had come to an end, and why those great people had lost their paradise. Then he told me what his Philosopher master had said to his brother about it. He said one cause of the Moors' fall had been their tremendous admiration for all that was Greek. This admiration amounted almost to worship owing to which their religion received a set-back. The other cause was their marrying Christian women freely and continuously, for although these women had embraced Islam, the blood of the children of such marriages was mixture of Arab and Christian blood and the generations that followed were infected with all that was worst in the Spanish Character, such as bigotry, pride, intolerance and ignorance. The Spanish element was fed and grew strong on the pure, fine traits of the Arabs, while the Arabs themselves took up all that was narrow and impure in the Spaniards. This interchange of energies produced a race of Moors that no longer cared to live strictly according to the teachings of the Koran, and whereas the refinements of the pure-blooded Moor went always hand in hand with his religious principles, the refinements of the mixed generations degenerated into voluptuous luxury, pomp and show, arrogance and neglect of Justice and need of the poor. The stamina of the race lost its original potentiality and became weak and vulnerable and at the end the rulers were driven from their paradise.

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A few days after this conversation with my father-Beard I had another occasion to talk to him on the same subject as I had not agreed altogether with his notion on the cause of the decline of the Moorish Civilization. Timidly I asked him why marriages with foreigners were not recommendable when, as I had heard it say, such marriages introduced fresh blood into the race, whereupon he said that no person belonging to a race of advanced and higher culture should marry a foreigner of vulgar breeding and low principles, but should aim to marry a foreigner of still higher tendencies and culture as those possessed by him for only then he could hope to improve his stock physically and morally. Not being able to find such a person "healthy in Mind and Body" he should rather marry one of his own people. I then asked this wise Beard about intermarriage with cousins and other relatives. He said that such marriages in the long run would weaken the blood and in time give rise to a crop of idiots.

Each time the brother of the old philosopher paid a visit, he went with my master down into the cellar! There they lifted the old stone-slabs beneath which lay buried many treasure-boxes filled with large radiant pearls! If but the Inquisitors had known what fortunes this old, shaky house held! Everyone thought it was inhabited by proverty-stricken Christians. Each time when they went to the cellar, the uncle of my master filled a small bag with pearls which he carried away to his village there giving them into the keeping of Monsieur Le-Brun, his trusty Christian

friend of Jewish descent who would take care of the pearls until the day of departure for they had to cross the Spanish frontier as well!

At last Rebecca was well enough to travel. When my master requested his father to have his long beard removed and wear Christian attire, the old man protested violently. He shouted and bellowed so loud that the noise was heard outside in the street. He did not wish to part with his priceless possession, his Beard! For hours his wife Rebecca and his son had to entreat him to be sensible, and it was only when they said that the authorities would burn him together with his beard that he yielded, moaning and vowing that he would grow his beard again in France. I could hardly recognize him when I saw him without his beard wearing breeches and a Spanish hat as he looked so much younger and stronger. The beard had been reduced to a mere stubble. It was no longer my father now as it looked like a baby. I had not the courage to call it 'Father-Beard' any longer. Rebecca was wearing man's attire which suited her remarkably well.

As the old philosopher still was grumbling at the injustice done to him, there was a knock at the door. It was a monk who when passing by had heard the shouts. He enquired whether he could help. He went away afterwards; but the family was terrified because the old man had shouted in the Hebrew language and the monk would report that.

Whatever was left of Jewish dresses or other telltale objects was destroyed before the family left; they took nothing but what they wore on their bodies and a few swords, and of course they would take the pearls too later on when they joined Monsieur Le-Brun. At nightfall they left, making the journey for a short distance by foot up to the inn where Monsieur Le-Brun's conveyance would pick them up. The Frenchman himself would accompany them. He had furnished them with all the necessary material for a safe journey. On the way to the inn they had to pass the place where the stakes had been erected. Some of them were ablaze. To others naked human beings were bound and then set alight. When Rebecca heard the terrible screams of the victims she nearly fainted. Then I could bear it no longer and I shouted at the top of my voice: "Oh Christ! Divine Jesus Christ! Is this how your followers have understood thy saying 'Love Thine Enemy' by burning alive their fellowmen who have never harmed them? Each time they burn alive one of their human brothers they mock you! They crucify you a thousand times over again." But no one heard my voice and no one saw my despair. Arrived at the inn, the Frenchman joined us. My master's father and mother made use of the vehicle which Le-Brun had provided. But he himself and my master and his uncle were on horse-back. It took a few days before we reached the frontier and when we had crossed it, what a relief it was! We had gone quite far into France, when it was found that a small pearl-bag had slipped from its hiding-place within my master's saddle. The old man advised not

to go back for it. Afterwards it was agreed that my master should go in search of it while the others should go on in the direction indicated to him. My master crossed the border again and rode slowly back into Spain with his eyes on the ground. But he saw nothing. Suddenly he perceived a number of soldiers coming towards him on swift horses. As they approached I saw a monk on horse-back which was the same to whom my master had opened the door on the day when his father had shouted in Hebrew. My master turned his horse and fled, but alas......they outstripped him, surrounded him, accused him of Heresy and asked where the others were. My master drew his sword and fought desperately, but he was slain by the brutal soldiers. When passing away he whispered: "Praised be Jehova that father and mother are safe." So died my noble master. I mourned him, yet I was glad that he was not given to the flames alive, and that I had not to burn as once before when I was the beard of a monk in Alexandria.

CHAPTER IX

The Renaissance

I was reborn towards the end of the fifteenth century in a country called Italy in the town of Florence. Looking round I saw that this was a very picturesque town. It was spring. The climate was most enjoyable and the gardens and fields were bright with flowers. My master was sitting by a river which I heard was the river Arno. He talked to a man whose personality was very striking. He talked to him as a servant would do and I found out soon that he was indeed the servant of this man, who I heard, was Leonardo da Vinci, a great master of painting, sculpture and all the arts and crafts that anyone could imagine. He had long hair that fell in silken waves over his back and shoulders and was joined by his beard long, broad and flowing that covered the whole chest of the man, and I was inclined to call this beautiful beard the grandfather of all beards. But alas! I myself was the short beard of the servant of this wonderful Leonardo, and however I

tried to grow, I could not do so inspite of the rich oils and lotions that my master applied to me.

Although all we beards are brothers, I feared to talk to the glorious beard of Leonardo who did not seem to notice me, and it was only when I recited a poem in doleful accents in beard-language that he became aware of my existence and said a few encouraging words to me. I told him that I could not grow more than a few inches and he informed me that this was due to the continuous application of oils and the rubbing. Now how could I communicate this news to my master and tell him to leave me alone? Although we beards understand and speak all languages in the world, our masters would not be able to hear us when addressed by us. No matter how we shout and howl, we are not heard by men. We can hear and understand what they say, but they cannot hear us. So whatever golden piece of advice we could give them, it would never be heard by them. All we beards can do is to talk among ourselves in beard-language, and complain to each other if we have any grievances. Sometimes my master shaved me clean off because this was also considered a means of making hair grow, but I found it even more difficult to grow then, because the oils he applied to his chin clogged the pores and I could not get out.

Leonardo was about thirty years old when I had grown strong enough to see him at all, as half of the life of my master I was as good as blind from sheer weakness. I had never seen such a beautiful man as

Leonardo in all my lives before. He was tall and so strong that he could twist a horseshoe with his right hand as though it were mere soft clay. Yet he was so graceful and of such amiable disposition that he created a sensation whenever he walked through the town with his friends and his servant, my master. Everyone turned or stood to look at him, delighted to see him. On such occasions I saw that here were no mosques, only churches and cathedrals, for this was a Christian country. I saw many fountains and public baths. Men and women walked freely about in clean picturesque costumes, and monks and nuns were not seen so frequently. Dignitaries of the Church were attired in great pomp, visiting studios of Artists, ordering pictures of religious subjects and paying large sums for them. Every where I heard poetry, music and stories resembling those of the 'Arabian Nights', and I saw excavations were being carried on, all reminding me of the Moorish Civilization. It became clearer and clearer that Moorish culture had been handed on to the Christian people. Its blossom in Spain had faded to produce a fruit here, a thing different in shape and colour, but in essence the same, a mere Metamorphosis. I heard wise men talk of a 'Re-birth', and now in these modern days of the twentieth century I have learnt that the re-birth of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in Italy is called 'Renaissance', a word being derived from the French word 'Renascence' which means 'to be born again'.

But when I heard people say that this was a re-birth of all the ancient Greek learning, and that

its characteristic was its 'Humanism', I was sure that this was not true. This was not a re-birth of so-called ancient Greek and Roman culture, as those countries had distinguished themselves for their cruelty and slavery: their inhuman treatment of women and children and their utter lack of the spirit of universal brotherhood and equality. When again I heard that Humanism of the teachings of Christ had blended with ancient Greek wisdom to produce this re-birth, I could not believe that Christianity should have been lying dormant without producing a civilization for fourteen-hundred years from its beginning up to now, and only now had been able to blend with ancient Greek philosophy to form this re-birth. Anyone who had at least as much common sense as we beards have, could clearly see that this re-birth was due to Islamic culture in Spain that had *leavened* Europe for seven centuries, the chief traits of which were its *Humanism* and its principles of equality and *Human Rights.* What really happened was, that the '*living*' Islam had excavated the dead corpses of Christianity and Greek wisdom, had breathed its own life into them and had effected this re-birth which was a mixture of ancient Greek philosophies and orthodox Martyrdom, breathing, moving and *evolving* through the Spirit of Islam. Owing to all that was Greek and orthodox Christian in this mixture, women were still treated as inferior beings, and owing to the Islamic spirit in this mixture, women at the same time were respected, were praised in song and poetry, were objects of adoration and worthy of all the chivalry that swept the realm. Chivalry that had been brought to Europe by the

Arabs! I traced the same mixture in Italian Art. The paintings of the great masters either represented scenes from Greek mythology or episodes from the martyrdom of Christ and the Saints. But the spirit expressed in those paintings was entirely Islamic as the pictures revealed in their sublime Beauty and Harmony a conception of the Unity of God, and a religious freedom which did not exist in these Catholic countries, nor existed in ancient Greece.

Humble Beard that I was, I decided that the subjects of the great painters of the Italian Renaissance were either Greek or Christian but that the spirit of their art had nothing to do with the great natural Beauty of Greek art, nor with the narrow purity of Christian asceticism, but was the same as I had seen expressed in the incomparable glory of the mosques in Cordova that did not speak of a 'Father in Heaven', but of 'God the Incomprehensible'.

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I heard that there were a great number of Morescoes', or Christianized Moslems in Italy, belonging to those who had fled from the fire ordeal in Spain Although they had embraced Christianity, they were persecuted, suspected of being still Moslems at heart. They formed an undercurrent here, and they were often consulted on various matters, as they were known for their intelligence and skill. One of my master's friend was such a Christian convert. His Moslem name had been 'Ali', but now he was 'Lorenzo'. He was a Historian who had written many valuable books all of which had been seized and burnt by the

clergy. He had been reduced to great poverty, and I heard, that he eked out a small income by translating Greek and Latin manuscripts for the Italians. Leonardo da Vinci had employed him to translate a piece of Greek literature he had found at an excavation, for Leonardo did not know Greek. He only knew Latin which he had taught himself. Lorenzo had become a friend of my master who pitied his condition and often found him work. Both friends met now and again at a tavern for a sip of 'Vino Roso' and a chat. Here they complained to each other about the injustice of nature who had given too much to one and too little to the other: for Lorenzo had brains but no money, and my master had no brains and had some money. Moreover his beard could not grow, and that was his chief complaint when he looked at Lorenzo's bushy beard who was a wonderful friend of mine. We two beards listened very attentively to what our two masters said, and much information we gathered on such occasions.

Lorenzo related his sad experiences in Spain. He had a gift to sway and move his listeners, and my master condemned Fernando and Isabel for their inhuman treatment of Moslems and Jews. In those days it was well-known all over Europe what paradise of knowledge and tolerance the Moors had brought to Spain and that every child could read and write while the rest of the world was steeped in ignorance. It was well-known that knowledge was branded as an evil of Hell by the clergy and the people were sick of the despotism of the church. Protests against the methods

and the corruption of the Catholic church had risen in all countries. I heard that the idea of the unity of God and the purity of Islam taught by the Koran, was slowly gaining ground everywhere, showing a white radiance in contrast to the black mire into which the Catholic Church had fallen. I heard that since several centuries 'free-thinkers' had arisen who broke away from the church in disgust. This movement was called the 'Reformation', the result of which was termed as 'Protestantism', and its followers were the Protestants who were considered arch-heretics by the Catholic church. Lorenzo said that the teachings of Islam had produced the Reformation and that this Reformation in turn had produced the *new birth*, called afterwards the 'Renaissance'. Great Historian as he was, he had watched the current events all over the world and he said that the phenomenon of such a new birth as in Europe was not a unique thing. Everywhere else in the world the same thing took place. For example in the Peninsula of India at the beginning of this same century owing to the Moslem rule before the time of the 'Moghuls', Indian Reformers rose who preached the 'Oneness' of God and reformed the polytheistic religion of the Indian peoples. The outcome of this was a new birth afterwards called the 'Indian Renaissance'. Lorenzo even knew some of the names of those Reformers, one being 'Kabir' and another 'Guru Nanak'. He said that wherever Islam raised its banner the same thing happened, and he assured my master that there could not possibly be any 'new birth' without a Reform that was inspired by a pure and lofty principle. The two

friends lowered their voices when they discussed the state of affairs of their own times; the immoralities of the monasteries and nunneries; the pride and rapacity of the cardinals; the disgraceful sloth and vice of the lower clergy all of which had been exposed in a powerful treatise by the French writer 'Nicholas de Clemenges'. I heard my master say that Leonardo da Vinci himself deplored the appalling degeneracy of the church and that a friend of his had overheard a cardinal in the Vatican who had said: "This fable of Christ has been to us a source of great gain." Hearing this, Lorenzo said that anyone who doubted Christ in that way was committing a great sin as the Koran itself confirmed the existence of Christ, and that inspite of all the fear of being burnt, he himself would have never embraced Christianity had he thought that Christ was a mere fable and had never lived. My master told Lorenzo in a whisper that Leonardo was a free-thinker, was not a devout Catholic and in his heart was an admirer of Moorish culture. Being his servant, he knew Leonardo better than others, and I, being the beard of this servant of Leonardo, had seen more things in the great painter's studio than even my master had seen.

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One evening when my master sat with Lorenzo in the tavern, a new minstrel had arrived whose play on a violin was very much applauded. My master and his friend admired the skill and the feeling with which he played and I could see that not only my friend, Lorenzo's beard, but all the beards present

were thrilled by the minstrel's performance. My thoughts travelled back to the time when I had been reborn as a Goat's beard in Spain which then was ruled by ths Visigoths before the arrival of Tarik. I remembered what rough discordant war chants and otherwise tuneless church hymns I had heard then, and what a joy it was when at my re-birth in the tenth century in Cordova I heard the music of the Arabs who had brought with themselves to Spain 'Sweet Melody and Song' for the first time. I do remember well that during my life in Abd-ur-Rahman's 'Paradise' I had seen this music take root in Spain. I had heard how the musical patterns of the Moslem musicians were being copied and were being sung at all the courts of Europe, and how the Moorish dancers entertained the people everywhere. Long since I had traced in the music and songs of the Italian people the Echoes of Spanish-Moorish music, but this minstrel here seemed to have stepped straight out of the tenth century and tears gathered in my eyes listening to his beautiful play.

When he had finished, a storm of applause broke forth revealing what stuff the Italians were made of. Then Lorenzo informed my master that the wealth of musical instruments of Europe was almost entirely of Moorish origin. The 'lute' which is called '*al-ud*' in Arabic, the '*rabab*' which is the forerunner of the violin; the European 'Guitar', in Arabic called '*quitarah*'; the cymbals, the tambourine and the '*berbat*', now called 'barbitone', and hosts of other instruments, all of which are of Moorish origin. I heard that the

name 'tambourine' was the dimunitive of the Arabic '*tambour*', from which instrument the name '*tamburdar*' was derived. The '*tamburdar*' was a Moorish wandering minstrel, who sang of love and beauty and in passionate accents extolled the virtues and graces of 'woman'. He prostrated himself before the feminine Ideal in adoration as no Greek, no Roman, no Jew and no Christian, but only an Arab could have done, for had not the Holy Prophet said: "Paradise lies at the feet of mothers?" The term '*tamburdar*' was corrupted by the Christians into 'troubadour', which was a Christian minstrel and the Spanish copy of the Moorish Minstrel. These troubadours went from country to country. They covered later on the South-East of France and were called 'Provencal Singers' and there is enough evidence to show that their songs were mere translations of Moorish songs, and that their modes and sentiments did not differ from those of the Moorish Models. They were scattered all over Europe and in that way disseminated the Moorish spirit unconscious of what they did.

I heard that there existed Greek treatises on music, and also such treatises by the Arab authorities 'al-Faraby', 'ibn-Sina', 'ibn-Bajjah' and others. But it was admitted and proved later on, that the still existing original treatise on music by the great Arab Authority al-Kindi, contained not only an exposition how to write musical notation correctly, but it contained the *discovery* that notes have a time-value in themselves. This had been unknown in Greek or Christian music and was an entirely new principle.

It was called *'iqau'* in Arabic and constituted an indispensible element in Arab music. This *measured music* was explained in detail in al-Kindi's treatise which was translated into Latin later on, with the result that this discovery was adopted by Christian Europe and it was said that one 'Franco of Cologne' was the inventor of it! Franco who lived four centuries after al-Kindi, produced the same notation contained in al-Kindi's work which held its place in the musical world of Christian Europe ever since and was called 'Franconian Notation'!! We beards were struck at the fraud that had been practised and we wondered at the cowardice of people who could not face the truth, beset by sheer religious prejudice and jealousies. I have heard that the light of culture must be handed on at all costs and that the only crime is to obscure the source of this light, because this action dims the light by which humanity is to find its way. Cut off from its historical source, the light of culture loses its potential force; is extinguished at last, in which case humanity will grope in darkness or perish.

In my later re-birth I have heard a scholar say that the enemies of Islam in their despair to find someone who brought science, philosophy, music and poetry to Europe, unwilling to own the actual sources, have got hold of Greece, and like a beast of burden have packed it with 'origins' of everything that happened in history. There is not a good thing but it must be of Greek origin, so that the beholder is sick of seeing it, and wonders when the last straw will come that will break the poor beast's back. Yes,

I remember my later re-birth when I heard the music of the German composers '*Handel*' and '*Bach*', who had developed the Greek hymn. Then I found that their sacred works and especially the 'Largo' of 'Handel' expressed the Christian spirit of sacrifice and world renunciation which is entirely absent in the ancient Greek hymn. The other works of the two composers are a mixture of the evolved hymn and Moorish music which here was somewhat pruned of its passionate sentiments of love and romance, forming generally the *Melody* of the piece while the structure of the Hymn formed its background or accompaniment of the melody.

I have known that the best music of ancient Greek was a beautiful Hymn. Religious temple music was derived from the former with a graceful dance round the idol in the temple. There were also dramatic choruses chanted in unison, and otherwise plain folksongs. Again, the best music in Israel were the psalms, mostly the fine psalms that King David played on his Harp, an instrument that owes its origin to Egypt But all this music contained nothing of the lyric-romantic element of the music of the Arabs, and yet the Europeans will credit every other nation for having given to them this melodious wealth excepting the Arabs, of whom in 1854 a famous German authority on music, said: "And above all they brought us a song."

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Leonardo da Vinci had gone to Milan, called by Ludovico Sforza, the Regent of Milan who was nicknamed: 'The Moor'. My master and Lorenzo had gone too, as the great painter required Lorenzo to pose for him sometimes, since, he had a fine muscular frame which satisfied Leonardo's craze for anatomy. Moreover, Lorenzo was a good judge on the age and origin of ancient excavated fragments, and Leonardo soon found that he was a source of information on all subjects, a linguist and an excellent conversationalist. At the court of Milan Lorenzo found ample work of all kinds, and his poverty came to an end. Milan was the birth-place of my master who was overjoyed that his friend at last was in better circumstances. Lorenzo was still his tender companion and never forgot what the humble servant of Leonardo had done for him in former days of stress.

On a fine summer afternoon the two friends walked through the colourful landscape near Milan. They reclined on the lushy grass of a meadow close to a streamlet where many wild flowers grew. From here they could look across the fields that stretched away in graceful undulations merging in the distance with the delicate blue mists of the horizon. Lorenzo had a book in his hand which I had seen before, and I knew it was the '*Divine Comedy*' of the Italian Poet 'Dante'. My master was is a good mood for he had taken Lorenzo's advice and had stopped creaming his chin at night, and I had managed to grow half an inch. Once my master had said to Lorenzo that if his beard could grow he would marry. I knew he

paid attention to one of the flower-girls in the market place. Her name was Rosetta; a pretty village maiden of eighteen. My master was fifteen years her senior. He bought often flowers from her and paid a high price for them. He had saved quite a lot of money and could afford to keep a wife.

Now Lorenzo had opened his book and began to read about. But after a while he shook his head, closed the book and started talking. Then I heard that the 'Divine Comedy' was the very copy of the works of the Great Moslem Mystic *ibn-Arabi*, who lived nearly a century before Dante. It was said that other critics too were of the opinion that the model for Dante's 'Divine Comedy' had been *ibn-Arabi's* works, as it was almost the same in style, conception, imagery and composition. Here was that rich glow of colour, the grace and refinement in the treatment of the passion of love, chivalry and religious devotion, as it is found in *ibn-Arabi's* creations. Indeed, said Lorenzo, no one could fail to see that the same romantic vein ran through every Italian poem. Like a child that inherits the traits of its father, so Christian Europe had inherited the glowing imagination and the creative powers of its Arab father. I heard, that inspite of itself, Christian Europe was the bearer of Moorish culture, which was its heredity, and it could not help propagating it, even without knowing it. I wondered at the name *Romanticism* as distinguished from *Classicism*. At my later rebirths I had heard that the term *Classicism* was derived from the writings of certain Greek Scholars, whence originated the phrase

'First Class Writings'. But the art of story-telling came from the Arabs. It spread from Moorish Spain via Provence to France and from Moorish Sicily to Italy. It was this art of story-telling which the Arabs had introduced that afterwards went under the name of 'Fiction'. It was due to the influence of this kind of writing and the poetry of the Arabs that the language called *Italian* came into existence. Before that time Roman people spoke and wrote only Latin. The Italian language was then looked upon as a 'vulgar tongue' and was called *Roman*. It was the type of writing introduced by the Arabs, which when adopted by France went under the name of *Roman*, which literally meant a book of fiction, just as we say 'China' for porcelain. Thus a book of fiction came to be called a 'Roman' in France and Germany, and a 'Romance' in England. Fiction, poetry, music, dances, the very thinking in terms of love, chivalry and adventure as did the Arabs, all such 'imaginative splendour' was called by Christian Europe: 'Romanticism', and such thought 'Romantic'. I heard that the Italian author *Boccaccio* called the chapters of his book 'Decameron', *Novela*, which means a 'Novelty', and ever since, a book of fiction is termed a 'Novel' or a 'Romance'.

Hearing all this I realized how incorrect it was to say that "Moorish poetry contained the *romantic* element!" This was putting the cart before the horse! But it is correct to say that Moorish poetry contains the sentiments of love, chivalry and adventure, and after the Roman people had been influenced by these

sentiments, such sentiments were called by Christian Europe *Romanticism.* Lorenzo said that Boccaccio's Decameron was based on the Arabian Nights, with the difference that the thousand and one nights were limited to ten days in the Decameron I had heard of the 'Arabian Nights', and I knew that this creation of the Arabs was the magicwand that had transformed all Europe and Asia. The fairy-fabric of dream and wonder. The realm of adventure, love, chivalry, music, poetry, art, where the impossible merges with the possible, supplying a vision of an existence that in its realism establishes new laws, and in its idealism by sheer flight of imagination reaches great philosophic depth and truth, transcending space and time. Lorenzo said that since the eleventh century all over Europe the crude method of versification that existed was done away with and that of the fifteen brilliant modes of prosody of the Arabs five were adopted in Europe and elsewhere, as the correct way of versification. I heard that the English poet 'Chaucer' who wrote the *Canterbury Tales,* had been brought up in Provence where he lived and assimilated Moorish prosody and afterwards became the 'Father of English Poetry'. Such poets the Arabs were that almost all their works on medicine, botany and other subjects were written in poetry, and that every book on mathematics and philosophy contained a chapter on the laws of music at the end. We beards shook our heads in amazement, thinking the Arabs must have been the very incarnations of poetry and music. Then we heard that the chief traits of the *pre-Islamic* Arab were generosity, chivalry and an abundant gift

of poetry, and that since the Prophet Mohammed was also an Arab, these traits were his own too. In addition, he was endowed with prophetic vision. He became the receptacle for God's Word, and Islam and the Koran came into existence. Islam with its teaching of the Unity of God, humanism and Human Rights, combined with the Arab traits of chivalry, generosity and poetry, furnished the world with the civilizations we have seen so far and shall see in future. Lorenzo said that whereas the nature of the Arab race was the fountain of poetry, music and artistic impulses, it was from the Koran that they imbibed their accurate observations of nature and their rational thinking that gave rise to all their philosophy and scientific discoveries.

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The sun slowly declined as my master and Lorenzo still sat by the streamlet, discussing the wonderful nature of the Arab race and Islam. I knew that after having heard so much from Lorenzo, my master was almost ready to become a Moslem, as his heart longed for freedom and progress. Presently Lorenzo showed him the binding of his book and I heard that it was the Moslem way of binding books which had been adopted all over Europe. I heard also that the Moslems had ruled Sicily for three centuries and that afterwards in the twelfth century the Catholic ruler Roger II allowed every non-Christian to practise his own religion. His court was thronged with Arabic philosophers, scientists, poets, and musicians. He himself went about in Moslem costume and it was said

that Christian women were also attired in Moslem fashion. We two beards rejoiced on hearing of so much tolerance in a Catholic ruler, as beards are the most freedom-loving creatures on earth. I heard that afterwards Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, who was Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and at the same time ruled Sicily and Germany, was the patron and friend of the Moslems. His very habits were oriental and at his court thrived Arabic philosophers and scientists together with Greek and Hebrew scholars. Moslem craftsmen taught the inhabitants the art of weaving fine fabrics and other crafts. Commerce, industry and arts flourished and were even encouraged by the clergy who mostly placed a ban on philosophy and science. At the same time I heard that Boccaccio's 'Decameron' had been condemned by two popes for having criticised the clergy. I heard that in the fourteenth century the Arabic influence coming in a rich stream from Sicily gave birth to what is called the 'Italian Renaissance'. All the towns of Italy clamoured for the immense variety of fineries introduced by Moorish culture. They vied with each other to flood the markets with the new styles and fashions and the new products of arts and crafts of every description, originally designed and made by Moslems in Sicily.

Frederick of Hohenstaufen was the first to introduce real education in Germany and he created a university at Naples. From all quarters of Europe pupils flocked to this university for therein were housed a most valuable and important quantity of Arab manuscripts. Arab culture had become a vogue, or rather

a craze and the study of Arab learning was undertaken in Paris and Oxford. But before that, in the thirteenth century the scholar Roger Bacon had been accused of being a Moslem for teaching science in England. So much was science known to be of Moslem origin. I heard that Arab Astronomers knew that all heavenly bodies were spheres that moved, and when Al-Idrisi ascertained by natural observations that the earth was a sphere too, the Arabs must have believed that it rotated like all the other heavenly bodies.

I often wondered what had become of all those manuscripts that had been left behind when the Moors and Jews were driven out of Spain. I knew that thousands and thousands were burnt, but no doubt other thousands were lodged in museums and archives all over Europe. I knew that Al-Kindi's works on music were resting too in such sepulchres which are sealed fountains, open only to a few chosen ones. Later on I heard that Al-Farabi's works on music with drawings of thirty instruments by his own hand, lie buried in the Museum of Madrid.

I saw for myself now that from the most delicious confectionery and culinary art, the most artistic and elaborate arrangements of the dining tables and dances, the wealth of glass ware and mosaics, up to the most accurate astronomical observations and everything of consequence for evolution and progress, Europe owed to Moorish culture.

Lorenzo now related a historical event that had happened at the beginning of the seventh century.

He said, that when the Prophet had conquered Mecca; had generously pardoned all his enemies, and all the idols had been destroyed, he acquainted every man and woman with what he stood for, and asked his or her personal agreement with his ideology. Those who freely gave their consent to join, of them he formed the society to advance that ideology in the world. No one was to be compelled to agree. Compulsion was ruled out. It was society formed by *social contract*, which was based on the rule of the people who believed in the ideology of managing their own affairs and rule out all external despotic governments, and this was called later on: *Democracy*. I heard that owing to this, the new custom of franchisement of man and woman arose, to have power to elect their own manager, and this was called later on: 'The Right to Vote' and was granted to every man and woman alike. I had also heard that Rousseau was called: 'The Father of the French Revolution', because his ideas had produced revolt in the peoples' minds against their despotic rulers. I heard that once the Moslems had been oppressed likewise by their own despots, and rising in revolt they demanded: 'Equality, Fraternity and Justice'. While the cry of the French Revolutionists had been: 'Equality, Fraternity and Liberty'. The revolting Moslems had omitted the word 'Liberty', because they knew they were free already; but the French were apparently still serfs, and therefore clamoured for 'Liberty'. Still, they felt instinctively, without consciously knowing it, that they, like Rousseau himself, were far-flung products of that same day when the Prophet Mohammed had explained his ideology in Mecca. But for this

instinctive knowledge they could at all find the courage to revolt when Rousseau's ideas so to say, reminded them that they were free agents too.

Lorenzo then quoted the last speech of the Prophet which he delivered as he performed his farewell pilgrimage to Mecca when he addressed 40,000 pilgrims, and said: "Ye people harken unto my words, for I know not whether after this year I will ever be amongst you here again. Your lives and your property are sacred and inviolable until the end of time. The Lord has ordained to every man a share of his inheritance. A testament is not lawful to the prejudice of heirs. The child belongs to the parent and the violator of wedlock shall be punished. Ye people, *ye have rights over your wives and they have rights over you. Treat your women well and your slaves*; see that you feed them with such food as you eat yourselves. And if they commit a fault which ye are not willing to forgive, then sell them, *for they are the servants of the Lord and are not to be tormented.* Ye people, harken unto my speech and comprehend it! Know that every Moslem is the brother of every other Moslem. All of you are the same equality; ye are one brotherhood."

My master had listened with awe to that last sublime speech of the Prophet Mohammed, and tears gathered in his eyes.

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Lorenzo now picked a few wild flowers and inhaled their sweet perfume. Both friends got up and walked slowly along the bank of the streamlet towards the town.

The sun was setting amidst a glory of crimson, gold and purple. My master drew Lorenzo's attention to the beauty of the sunset. Lorenzo looked at it and exclaimed: "Ah! Light and colour, and the eyes to see them! We must go to *Al-Hazen* for these subjects!" Then I heard that *Al-Hazen* was a great Moslem mathematician who lived in the eleventh century. I heard that he was the discoverer of the propagation of light and colours. He knew of optical illusion and the angles of incidence and reflection. He saw the power of magnifying lenses and knew of the law of gravitation. I heard that he experimented on spheric and parabolical mirrors and contradicted the Greeks who thought that concerning vision, the rays of light come from the eyes. He discovered that the rays come from the object and impinge on the retina. He explained that we see objects singly because the visual images are formed on semetrical portions of the two retinas. I heard that "he explained reflection and refraction of light showing the cause of morning and evening twilight and he solved the problem of finding the point in a convex at which a ray coming from a given point shall be refracted to another given point. He was the first to discover that the atmosphere increases in density as it decreases in height and *that the path of a ray of light through air on entering obliquely must be curvilinear and concave to the earth.*" My master was struck on hearing all this, and we two beards shook our heads in wonderment. I remembered that what was called "modern optical science" later on, was all based on the discoveries of *Al-Hazen* of the eleventh century! I thought it was a pity that man does not look at

events from historical point of view. He will always compare discoveries made in the twentieth century with those made in the eleventh century nearly a thousand years ago, joining the eleventh and twentieth century as if they were but yesterday and to-day. Modern optical science has told us not much more since *Al-Hazen.* I thought that after all those discoveries he made in the eleventh century it must have been an easy task for the scientists of the coming generation to get on! I was sure that modern science was predicted and conceived when the Koran said: "Reflect upon the wonders of creation, go in search of knowledge, go and search and re-search." Modern science had been conceived then and it was born later on in its experimental shape in the person of *Al-Hazen.*

Lorenzo said that the Moslem *Abbas ibn-Firnas* in the ninth century discovered the making of glass "from stones". Glass grinding had its origin in Moorish Spain, where lenses first were made for the instruments wherewith to watch the heavenly bodies. Then I remembered that in my later re-births I had heard the English word: "*Alidade*", which is that part of any optical, surveying and measuring instrument which comprises the indicator and microscope for taking accurate reading, and since I heard that the word "*Alidade*" is derived from the Arabic word "*Alidadah*", it must be a proof that the Arabs have invented those instruments. Another English word I heard was "*Alichel*", derived from the Arabic "*Al-iqbal*" which is the position of a planet with reference to an angle. I heard that

the Moslem *Abu'l Hassan* was the inventor of the telescope which he describes as a tube to which diopters are fixed. I heard also "that the Moslem *Mohammed Shakir* found in the ninth century the obliquity of the ecliptic. He marked for the first time the variation of the lunar attitude; he laid down the correct course of the equinoxes and he discovered the movements of the solar apogee, of which the Greeks knew nothing." I did not really quite understand what all this meant, I only repeat what I heard. Lorenzo said that the Greek knew geometry, but could not have known much of algebra. He said the Arabs were the inventors of algebra which name is derived from the Arabic word: *Al-Jebr*; nor could the Greeks have known higher mathematics as mathematics cannot proceed at all unless the cipher is found, and Greeks had no cipher, since this was brought to us by the Arabs. The word cipher being *"sifr"* in Arabic, meaning "empty" or Zero. I heard that Arabs brought also the Arabic numerals from *"one to nine"* which were zealously adopted by Christian Europe who found the heavy Greek and Latin numerals useless for algebra and mathematics. I heard that the Greeks thought of the stars as "gems *fixed* in crystalline domes." But the Prophet Mohammed disagreed with this notion and said: "The stars swim in their orbits." He said also: "The sun moves in a fixed place," and he talked about the eleven planets. But these facts were conceiled for a thousand years from the Christian scientists because their clergy discredited them and did rather believe in the Greek idea. I heard that Greeks knew about a thing called: "Atom". Lorenzo's beard told

me to take this information with a pinch of salt, as one never knows what the Greeks meant by "Atom". Perhaps they meant a very tiny particle of matter. I said this was quite possible as at the time when they were supposed to have found what Atom is, they were having human sacrifices and Aristotle advised people to throw their unwanted children on the dump to let them die of starvation. I was myself in Greece at the time of Alexander the Great and I had seen that cruelty, ignorance and superstitions prevailed there and that old people were killed or allowed to starve. What a pity that the after-world believed rather in the discoveries of such a people than in the discoveries of the highly intellectual, moral, God-fearing chivalrous and humane Arab-race whose Koran says: "If you let one human-being die without making an effort to save it, you have, as if, killed the whole of humanity." Lorenzo spoke again, and I heard that the Koran urges man to observe the difference of colours in nature and study them. Even the fact that honey is of different colours is mentioned as an important *Sign*. It is owing to this that the zeal to solve the colour problem seized the Arabs, and *Al-Hazen*, the master of optics, was the result of their research. I witnessed the same zeal later on in Christian Europe, as I had heard of the colour theories of Newton, and the German poet "Goethe". This frantic research went on for centuries, until later in modern days it dwindled and was replaced by the craze to solve the colour problem of Black, Brown and White!

As we reached the town, we saw Rosetta going to church with her friend Julia, who turned and smiled at us. "There they go to confess to the father, the pious damsels," remarked Lorenzo, and his beard winked at me, and told me that when young, Lorenzo had been in love with a Spanish Christian girl, but he did not marry her because she had refused to embrace Islam.

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I had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon's outing. The walk through the fragrant fields; the rest by the streamlet, the instructive discourse of Lorenzo, and the beautiful sunset afterwards. It was the same sun that I had seen when I was the beard of a Macedonian soldier in the army of Alexander the Great; the same sun that the Persians had worshipped; the same sun that the Greeks had called Apollo and worshipped as a god; yes, it was the same sun of which the Prophet Mohammed had said that: "It moves in a fixed place." What a rational expression was this compared to all the former confused, mythical meanings attached to the sun!

We had arrived at Lorenzo's quarters now which were in the vicinity of the palace where Leonardo was residing. The first thing Lorenzo did was to put his wild flowers into a jug with water. He said that the Prophet had been extremely fond of flowers and whenever he saw a rose lying in the way, he would stoop and pick it up. My master lighted a fire in the stove to prepare the evening meal, and while Lorenzo helped, he went on chatting. He said he would not even know

the names of the flowers he had picked had it not been for the labour put forth by his Arab fore-fathers.

I heard that the Prophet advised his followers to use medicine. Owing to this the Arabs searched the world for medicinal properties in plants not only, but went in search of beautiful and rare flowers to create gardens for the delight of man, and in this way the first great Botanists and also the physicians came into existence, amongst them was the physician and philosopher *Avecenna*, whose work on medicine is called "The *Canon*" and whose hundred treatises on philosophy have enriched and fed humanity for centuries. I heard that the Arabs were the first to classify plants. In their treatises we find more than two thousand plants. Sexual differences of plants are described and the cultivation of fruit trees is explained. Plants that grow from seeds or cuttings are classified. Treatises on agriculture give new ideas on grafting, the various natures of soils and how to use different manures. It is explained there too how to diagnose the diseases of trees and how to cure them. I heard that the Arab Surgeons introduced for the first time the application of caustics to wounds. I heard that on six occasions the Koran urges the Arabs to *travel* and *travel* in search of knowledge, even as far as China, and it was owing to these imperatives in the Koran that they travelled round the world and from all quarters of the globe brought the wealth of learning not to keep it for themselves, but to enrich humanity, especially Christian Europe, that could give nothing for all these treasures but *ungratefulness.*

I heard that travelling was unknown before Islam and was contrary to the law of every country. Anyone who travelled was an outcast. Alexander the Great went round the world, not in search of knowledge, but driven by the lust of conquest, to collect gold and to enslave and torture humanity. But for the search of knowledge of the Arabs, Spain would not even have known fireworks, silks, porcelain and paper-making which the Arabs had actually brought back from China. I heard that the Koran says: "*Go in search of the beginnings of life.*" Then I did remember that in my later rebirths I had heard of a great naturalist named "Darwin", who actually went in quest of the beginnings of life and it seemed to me that the spirit of the Koranic sayings had filtered through the centuries and influenced all the coming generations and humanity at large.

During the evening meal my master told his friend that he was going to marry soon. He said he liked both, Rosetta and also Julia and he would marry them both if Catholic law would permit it as did Moslem law. Then the friends discussed polygamy. "Let us begin with Plato," said Lorenzo, and I heard that Plato was the originator of "*royal lies*", that is, "Diplomacy" or the art of cheating the people and telling them lies in order to keep them quiet like a herd of cattle. Lorenzo said that the same Plato advised "a community of wives" and that the most brave among man should have the privilege of many wives. Polygamy was practised in Greece where woman had no greater status than that of a cow. I heard that Aristotle had said:

"Woman is to man as the slave to the master, the manual to the metal worker, the barbarian to the Greek." Lorenzo said that the works of Plato (not his so-called sayings) reveal that he put down slavery as a necessary institution and considered woman also a mere slave. The philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are therefore mere spinnings of intellectual yarns, since they are not based on the observation of natural law and deny progress and emancipation altogether, and stand in sad contrast with the emancipating force of the Koran not only, but since they are 'static', they put the clock back by producing stagnation as they actually have done. Hearing all this I talked to Lorenzo's beard and he agreed that historical perspective is ever distorted, modern man talking of the Greeks as though they had been a 'nation' of the twentieth century, while they were but *citizens* of city-states in Greece, that continually fought each other. I told him too that in later centuries I had heard a writer say: "Suffering as we do from the legend of beautiful antiquity we forget the hideous side of Greek and Roman life."

Then Lorenzo spoke again and said that the Popes had altogether forbidden marriage and had imposed celibacy. When they allowed marriage afterwards, it was not they who made the law that only one wife should be married. But they simply adopted the idea of the ancient Romans who had made it a rule that every man should have one wife only, not because of religious scruples but because of the great scarcity of women that prevailed then. Pre-Islamic

Arabs had an unlimited number of wives, and the Prophet Mohammed was the first to limit multi-marriage as a religious doctrine. How he was able to do that in the face of the wild, passionate Arabs, is miraculous. He set a limit of four wives, but says the Koran, only then can a man marry more than one wife, if he can do justice to them, as he would have to give them equal shares of clothing, jewellery, housing and food, and an equal portion of love to each, and since this is impossible, polygamy was out of the question, unless in unique circumstances. Besides, Prophet Mohammed, the inventor of the *contract* has put another obstacle to multi-marriage. The girl, or the parents of the girl can insist on a contract before marriage that binds the man never to marry another woman while his wife is alive. The two parties made an agreement which was signed by witnesses and was to be produced before a magistrate in case of default. The agreement was to be in writing before witnesses and this for the first time introduced the LAW OF CONTRACT in the world; individual, social and matrimonial. It proved that the Era of human freedom and independence of the individual had been initiated, and all men and women were equal, independent, and free to enter any contract they liked. We beards marvelled when we heard all this, amazed at the extent to which Prophet Mohammed had liberated the human-being as an individual and raised the status of woman not only equal to man but in certain respects even of greater consequence.

I heard that the Moslems however have brushed aside these restrictions imposed upon polygamy and

many rich men have married four wives, which even though it may be abominable, is an improvement on the custom of rich Christians of keeping so many mistresses beside their one wife and shirking the responsibility of caring for the children of these mistresses which are branded as **bastards** and have no share in their father's property. Many a mistress that has been abondoned by her keeper has drowned her child, not able to find food for it. The children of the wives of Moslems are generally well cared for, and even if a wife is divorced, the law decrees that the man must provide for the child.

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The two friends had finished their evening meal and while they cleared away the plates, Lorenzo talked about the cruel Catholic law that did not permit a divorce even in case of lunacy or incompatibility of character, and only after courting immorality, that is, after committing adultery a divorce could be granted. He said that according to Moslem law any incompatibility of temperament was cause enough for divorce, and that if two people could not live harmoniously together, they gracefully agreed to separate without resorting to a disgraceful act, and both, husband and wife were allowed to marry some one else after four months. Hearing this, I remembered that when I was reborn in the twentieth century, thirteen centuries after Prophet Mohammed, I heard that America for the first time seemed to agree with the Prophet's idea and made incompatibility of character a cause for divorce. Then my master said to Lorenzo: "Perhaps the difficult divorce among

Catholics is due to the fact that their marriage is a sacrament whereas Moslem marriage is only a contract!" Upon this Lorenzo replied: "Every contract of the Moslems is a sacrament. You have only one sacrament in your marriage while the whole life of a Moslem is to be a sacrament!" He then said that the spirit that produced the law of contract is reflected everywhere, in all dealings between individual and individual, and that the Koran is the first law-book that while law-giving, expressively addresses itself to *men and women* which no other law-book has done before, as only the man was addressed. This same spirit is also apparent in the law of procedure and evidence which the ancients had simplified in ordeals of fire and water. The person charged with the crime was made to walk through fire and so prove his innocence. The very phrase: "Law of Evidence" did not exist, just as the phrase: "Law of Contract" did not exist before Prophet Mohammed. The first and most important thing that was brought about by the new law was that no judge would decide any case unless both the parties were present and were heard, and that the burden of proof lay on the claimant and the man who stood as prosecutor, and that when no evidence was available and the claim was denied, the defendant was to deny the claim on oath. I heard also that the Prophet was the "first Judge to distinguish between intentional, premeditated murder and accidental homicide."

Since I had come to know that my master wished to marry in the near future, I had made an

effort to grow into a respectable beard. Whenever my master studied his face in the mirror I could see what progress I had made, and my master watched this progress with much satisfaction, as he seemed certain that girls like men with good-sized beards. He had decided after all to marry Rosetta as he had learnt that Julia was betrothed to a young soldier. Sometimes we saw this soldier at the flower-stalls of the two girls. He was tall, handsome and clean-shaven and I wondered at Julia's choice of a beardless husband! My master had given a costly ring to Rosetta. Her parents had given their consent to the match and the marriage was to be solemnized soon.

One day my master went to keep an appointment with Rosetta, but she did not turn up. He grew anxious, went in search of her and at last rode off to the village where she lived. He found her parents in tears. For a long time they would not tell him what had happened, until he heard from some people who had seen the girl, that she had eloped with a young, tall soldier. At the same time he learnt that she had taken the costly ring with herself, and that Julia having been deceived by her man and her friend Rosetta, had vowed to go into a nunnery. My master was furious. His beloved had eloped with a beardless soldier! All his wrath fell upon me, his poor beard. He imagined that I had grown too long and she had disliked that. He hurried away to the next barber shop and had his beard removed. What a shock, what a disgrace for me! Once again I was imprisoned beneath the skin and could neither hear nor

see anything. But thanks to Lorenzo's and Leonardo's better judgement, I was allowed to grow again, for they did not approve of my master's action, and Leonardo said he would not have a shaved servant. So I grew again, slowly and cautiously but I found that my master was always in a sourly mood. Sometimes he talked to himself and cursed all women.

Leonardo was very busy at court in these days. He had become absolutely indispensable to Ludovico who would not embark on any enterprise without consulting him first. I had heard that Leonardo was of illegitimate birth, and I had seen that he wrote from right to left like an Arab, and his writings had to be held up to a mirror to be read and understood at all. He was not only a painter. He was inventor, engineer, architect, mechanic and musician. In versatility he resembled the Moors. I knew that he explored nature, breaking away from stale antiquity and the scholastic intellectual weaving of the Greek Philosophers. He followed the method of the Moslem Scientists who moved from natural observations to experimental verification in the laboratory; and I saw in later centuries that this has remained the scientific method ever since. Leonardo was a true representative of the Renaissance which was in turn an Echo of the Moorish civilization. All his discoveries had been known to the Moslem Scientists centuries before, and I heard that Leonardo had read and had been influenced by *Al-Hazen's* Latin work on optics. The accuracy with which Leonardo painted the sunlight caught in a child's hair, was the same accuracy with which

Al-Hazen had observed that the path of a ray of light through air on entering obliquely must be curvilinear and concave to the earth. Thus, Leonardo in his great accuracy of natural observation was a true product of Moslem culture.

Leonardo had painted the two Mistresses of Ludovico and his wife Beatrice who died later on of child-birth. When Leonardo painted Ludovico himself, he charmed him often in the intervals with his play on his silver-harp and his fine voice. But besides painting, he was occupied at court with many more things which made me believe that he was perhaps an incarnation of the versatile Moslem composer *Ziryab* whose music seemed to have been transformed in this life into the art of painting; whose inventions and innovations had made the Andalusian world marvel; who was the arbiter of fashion; who added a fifth string to the lute, who knew a thousand songs by heart, and whose style of playing and singing was such that anyone who heard him would never listen to another. In a similar way Leonardo designed fashions, arranged masques and pageants and unique dinner parties, the table decorations often assuming the shape of whole miniature cities with gardens. Every day he created new surprises, and for years it was one brilliant round of feasts, pleasures and intrigues at the Duke's Court. Moreover, Leonardo designed cathedrals, bridges and war-machines for his patron; and he remained often for days with him in his private chamber, discussing strategems of war, as the Duke planned to attack the other city-states of Italy

with the help of the French. My master did not get leave so often now, as he and Lorenzo were generally present at court, helping Ludovico's attendants to carry out Leonardo's orders, who lived the life of a Duke himself! At the same time he painted the famous 'Last Supper' on the walls of the refectory of the convent of *Santa Maria delle Grazie*, which took him ten years to complete.

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Ludovico had invited the French to come and fight the Italian city-states, and after they had subdued his enemies, they turned upon the Duke himself and fought him. Ludovico put up a brave fight, but all the war-machines invented by Leonardo availed nothing and the Duke was defeated. In 1500 the French troops entered Milan, Ludovico was taken prisoner and was sent to Loches in Touraine where he ended his life in the dungeon.

After twenty years of brilliant court-life in Milan, Leonardo returned to Florence with the mathematician Salai who was his favourite assistant. Lorenzo and my master were also destined to see Florence again. Lorenzo was once more without employment. He was getting old and my friend, his beard, was quite grey. My master too was over fifty and I was getting grey. Leonardo moved again in the fashionable Society of Florence. But instead of painting, he pursued enthusiastically his scientific research. 'To invent' was his passion; and one day my master found himself lying in bed bruised all over! Something dreadful had happened! Leonardo had constructed a 'flying machine'.

The structure was *light* enough and a mechanism inside it, caused its wings to rise and fall. But the machine was not to start from the ground. Leonardo thought it was better if the wings were supported by a volume of air beneath them, at the very start. Hence the machine should be pushed off the roof of the house. There was a large compound on one side of the house that was packed with layers of straw in case of an accident. Leonardo had asked my master to get inside the machine and operate its mechanism. But I feared for my master since I saw he was terrified at playing the pilot, as he did not wish to break his neck. Strict secrecy was to be observed and therefore not even Lorenzo was to be informed by my master who was a most loyal servant. He could not bring himself to refuse Leonardo's request. The machine was taken to the roof and at the appointed day at dawn my master crawled inside and began to work its mechanism. Then the machine was pushed off the roof. The wings actually moved up and down; but they moved not quick enough, and the machine nose-dived, turned turtle and crashed into the yard going almost to pieces. Inspite of the precaution of straw, my master was hurt badly and from shock was nearly unconscious. Leonardo and his assistant sympathised with him. He was brought to his room as he could not walk, was given wine to revive him, and a physician and Lorenzo were sent for. His worst bruises were bandaged and Lorenzo looked after him proving an excellent nurse, so that my master soon got better. When Lorenzo heard what had taken place he said that Leonardo was not the first who had tried to

construct a flying machine. Then I heard that in the ninth century *Abbas ibn-Firnas*, the Moslem inventor of glass, had built a flying machine with wings of feathers. It carried him quite a distance, but since it had no tail it lacked balance, and when the pilot wished to alight, it crashed and killed him. This was the first pioneer who gave his life in the cause of aviation.

After some days Lorenzo removed the bandages and while doing so, he said that at the time when Christians fell at the feet of dead images imploring to cure their diseases, the Moslems had hospitals, physicians and pharmaceutists. I heard that from the tenth century onward the practice of medicine was regulated. A board of examiners was existing at Baghdad. The Moslem world had the first drug-stores and the first pharmacopoeia. Travelling hospitals existed and the great Hospital of *Al-Mansur*, which was founded in the thirteenth century at Damascus, was open to all sick people, no matter whether they were rich or poor, men or women. There were many separate wards in this hospital, for all kinds of intestinal diseases; fevers; skin-troubles; surgeries for ophthalmic and other complaints, and I heard that the hospital had lecture-rooms and dispensaries and also kitchens where food for the patients was prepared. We beards marvelled at all this, but more so when we heard that in Moorish Spain existed Moslem Surgeons who were women! And that women went to mosques unveiled, adorned in silk and jewels, looking like "the flowers in spring in a beautiful meadow." I learnt that boys and

girls sat in school together and that even slave-girls enjoyed education. Lorenzo said that Prophet Mohammed gave to women the right to own property at the beginning of the seventh century and that women in England had to wait for this privilege almost thirteen centuries after this, as only in the nineteenth century the boon to own property was granted to them! It would have been so easy for Christians to follow the glorious lead Moslems had given to them. But they were reluctant to adopt Moslem institutions simply because they were '*Moslem*'. Their religious prejudices made them suffer for centuries before they adopted that which was of genuine value, as I know when I was reborn later on, their condition was dreadful. In the eighteenth century barbers removed teeth by means of a key resembling a corkscrew. Beer was given to people with fever. Operations were performed without chloroform, and wounds tied up with dusters. There were no glass windows, no ventilation, no sewers, no pure water and no bathrooms.

I heard also a lot on the subject of chemistry. Lorenzo said that the name 'chemistry' is derived from the Arabic word *al-Kimia*. *Al* is the Arabic article 'the'. The *al* was afterwards dropped by the Christians and *Kimia* was corrupted into 'chemistry'. I learnt that the Arabs were great chemists. Lorenzo mentioned the name *Jabir ibn-Hayyan*; *Jabir* simply being pronounced: 'Geber'. After him came Razi who lived in the ninth century. In this connection I remember that when reborn in the twentieth century I heard the great authority on

chemistry 'Holmyard' say: "Razi is of exceptional importance in the history of chemistry since in his books we find for the *first time* a systematic classification of carefully observed and verified facts regarding chemical substances, reactions and apparatus, described in languages almost entirely free from mysticism and ambiguity."

Inspite of his many failures, Leonardo toiled on, spurned by curiosity to find the inmost recesses where nature kept her secrets of life and death. In the stillness of night his trusty assistants secured with difficulty the dead body of a prisoner who had committed suicide, and brought it to Leonardo's Laboratory, where the stage was set for dissection, a thing which was strictly forbidden by the clergy. Helped by his assistants, Leonardo dissected the dead man. Being master of anatomy, he knew how and where to cut and laid bare the internal mechanism of the human body, separating the parts, examining, analysing and experimenting. My master grew sick seeing all this cutting, and I simply closed my eyes. I liked Leonardo's studio, but not his laboratory, for there I saw grim skeletons, weird masks, bottles. phials; strangely shaped instruments, tubes, coloured powders, quicksilver, distillers, quaint dolls, piles of paper, rags and stoves. There were also rats, mice and rabbits in cages and big spider-webs with fat spiders that were being nourished with insects by Leonardo. It was a regular menagerie, such as any Moor used to keep, and the artist had these creatures to observe their movements and habits. Whenever my

master cleared up the rubbish, he received instructions not to disturb the cobwebs!

Leonardo had employed a woman to cook for him sometimes, as generally he dined with friends or with the Monks for whom he painted pictures. The woman was about thirty-eight and quite pleasant looking and Leonardo used her now and again as a model for his group-pictures. Her name was Lucia and she was rather a poor woman. But I was glad to see that my master liked her, had dropped his hatred for women and had made friend with her.

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One day my master informed Lorenzo that Leonardo had invented a thing called 'Pendulum'; but Lorenzo laughed and said that the pendulum had been invented by the Moslems centuries ago, and that they had measured time by clocks. I learnt that the Moslem scientists too had been the inventors of the 'Astrolabe'; of spherical Trigonometry; of the 'sine', 'tangent' and 'cotangent'. But what surprised me most was that they had built observatories to study the heavenly bodies. Strange to say they taught geography in schools by means of globes at a time when the rest of the world insisted that the Earth was flat.

Leonardo's invention fever suddenly experienced an interval when he saw the third wife of the Florentine lawyer Francesco del Gioconda who was extremely flattered on hearing that the great artist desired to immortalize his young wife by painting her. In those days an artist was like a demi-god and a king would

stoop to pick up the brush that he dropped. The lady's name was *Mona Lisa.* She was very beautiful and her portrait was destined to charm the world for many centuries to come. For I saw that Leonardo painted not only the lovely form of her face, its soft contours, the dimples in the velvet of her skin, the indescribable sweetness that lingered about her mouth on the point of setting the world on fire with its enigmatic smile: but he essayed to conjure up the mystery of her soul. Four years he toiled, exploring the inmost channels of her being, in the attempt to capture her soul with gentle allurements of the touch of his brush, until at last he had caught it and compelled it to manifest itself in the flesh. While he worked, anxious not to lose the unique expression on her face, he staged small dramas in his studio; Grotesque fairy-shows with sweet music, to keep her interested and animated. Sometimes Lucia took part in these performances, attired in quaint costumes, and my master, who was always present when Leonardo worked, watched and admired her graceful gestures. He had been laid up with a cold lately, and had discovered the sterling qualities of Lucia's character, for she had looked after him and nursed him like a mother.

Whenever Lorenzo saw the painting of Mona Lisa, he burst into rapturous praises. "Ah!" he cried on one occasion when Leonardo was absent: "Here we witness again the Islamic spirit of which the artist's substance is fashioned and which has expressed itself here in a glorious composition of colours!"

When the portrait was finished, the husband would not dream of claiming it, and when he heard afterwards that the king of France had bought it, he glowed with pride that the portrait of his wife was to adorn the cabinet of a king.

As the years went by, Leonardo took to a wandering life. He went to Rome for a time and then returned to Florence. But he seemed restless and when he was about sixtythree years old, he visited once more Milan. Here, after a brief rule, the son of Ludovico who had overthrown the French, had been defeated again by Francis I. This ruler was an ardent admirer of Leonardo, and he requested the artist to return with him to France, and it was in the beginning of 1516 that Leonardo crossed the Alps in company of his trusty friend Melzi. The castle of Cloux with its vine-yards and lovely meadows was to be his residence. My master had gone with him to Milan but he did not accompany him to France, and Leonardo had dismissed him with gifts when he heard that his faithful servant wished to marry Lucia. My master returned to Florence where Lorenzo attended the wedding and it seemed there was no happier couple on earth than my master and Lucia. A pretty little farm near Florence was to be their home, where they dwelt with Lorenzo.

About four years had elapsed when a friend of Lorenzo came from France with the sad news that Leonardo had passed away. He said that the artist had been a sceptic and for a long time had refused

to take the Holy Communion. I heard also that the tale of Leonardo having died in the king's arms was untrue. At the time of his death no one but his friend Melzi was present, the king being away. Nevertheless it was known that Francis I was much distressed at the artist's death and he wept bitterly on hearing the sorrowful tidings.

Soon after this, Lorenzo made the acquaintance of a rich Jewish merchant who offered him service and a handsome salary. I heard that Lorenzo was to be his companion and translate Greek and Arabic manuscripts for him which was the merchant's hobby. He had come to Florence on business and was going to Damascus which was his home, and Lorenzo was to accompany him to that place. My master wept when he took leave from his old friend, who promised to visit him whenever this was possible. As the friends embraced, we two beards touched each other also in emotional leave-taking.

Time rolled on and my master worked at his farm while his excellent wife kept the house clean and tidy; ever cheerful; ever ready to assist him in his work. She was a staunch catholic and my master never interfered with her religion which seemed to have helped her to become as perfect as she was. He went to church with her regularly. Only sometimes he repeated to himself some sayings of the Prophet Mohammed which Lorenzo had taught him, such as: "Help the lady first..." "He is best among you who is best to his wife..." "The wife is ruler in the house..." and, "Before

you take another wife, you must divorce the first." My master lived up to this, as he was a most chivalrous husband. One day a letter arrived from Lorenzo, stating that he was happily married at Damascus. This was very good news! Old Lorenzo, who would ever scorn wedlock, had married!

My master reached a high age and when he was nearly eighty, he caught a cold with high temperature. He was sinking fast and the priest was called to administer the Holy Communion with prayers and blessings. After my master had taken it, he began to whisper something with closed eyes. The priest, who could not clearly hear it, said that he was praying. But I was near to his lips and I heard that he was repeating sayings of the Prophet Mohammed that he had learnt by heart. They were the following lines: "He who leaves his home in search of knowledge walks in the path of God. He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to paradise. One hour meditation on the work of the Creator, is better than seventy years of prayer. To listen to the instructions of science and learning for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs; more meritorious than standing up in prayer for a thousand nights. To the student who goes forth in quest of knowledge, God will allot a high place in the mansion of bliss. Every step he takes is blessed and every lesson he receives has its reward. Him who favours learning, God will favour in the next world......" Then my master took a deep breath and said hardly audible: "Fare thee well, sweet Lorenzo."

When he was dead, Lucia wept bitterly. I was sorry for her. I was sorry for my master. I felt tired; I closed my eyes, thinking of my next rebirth.

CHAPTER X

Witchcraft and the Return of the Hydra

I was reborn at the very beginning of the 17th century in England, a country I had heard of before. My master had been in the habit of shaving himself, and only now, when he was nearing his 30th year, he let his beard grow, but trimmed it to a point. Whenever he looked into a mirror I noticed that he had a sallow complexion, a very long pointed nose, small blue eyes, and a red beard. I was this beard, and I did not like my dark-red colour. I did not like the face of my master either, nor his profession as he called himself "the assistant witch-finder", and I heard that the name of the chief witch-finder was "Hopkins". He had also a pointed beard of dark-brown colour and this beard who was a very friendly beard, told me the meaning of the word 'witch-finder'. He related to me so many gruesome tales in connection with the profession of witch-finding that I shuddered and wished my master had continued to shave me so as to prevent me from seeing all the tortures that the poor so-called witches had to endure.

England was ruled by King James I, the son of Mary, Queen of Scotland who had been beheaded by Elizabeth, the virgin Queen of England, for having conspired against her Government. I heard that King James had passed a new act concerning witches and that he had written a book on witchcraft called "Demonology" in which he had explained all about witches, demons and sorcery, as he considered himself an expert on the subject. I had heard that among the Jews people who were possessed by evil spirits were flogged to rid them of their devils. I had heard that in ancient Rome laws were made by which magicians could be burnt alive. But I never guessed that the funeral pyre of superstition and ignorance was still aflame, ready to devour more innocent victims, and I began to believe that, instead of going forward, humanity had taken quite a good number of steps backward. Perhaps the Spanish Inquisition had experienced a resurrection and had taken the form of witch-hunting, hand in hand with the idea of ancient Greece that old and useless people should be allowed to starve and die, and perhaps this idea had taken a more active shape in this century? I knew that at the time of the Inquisition mostly men had been condemned for Heresy; but I heard that now mostly poor, old powerless women were supposed to be in possession of the power of witchcraft, as I heard it say that "Witchcraft was more natural to women than men, because of their inherent wickedness."

The chief witch-finder Hopkins and my master were friends and went often out together in search of

witches. Sometimes they met at a fashionable inn which was visited by sportsmen all of which looked with awe and fear upon Hopkins, simply because he was a sportsman of greater fame and more competent than they were. Here I met quite a number of brother-beards who agreed with me that the king had made a mistake in writing a book on witchcraft, and I heard that he was called "the wisest Fool in Christendom" by the king of France, Henry IV. I learnt that this was Protestant England, and that it had been King Henry VIII, the father of Queen Elizabeth, who had successfully thrown off the Papal yoke. In those times, kings believed that they were above the law and could never be punished for whatever crime they did. A king could do and rule as he liked, and could do no wrong. Naturally King James believed the same, and it was owing to this idea that he and his people could never agree.

One evening a section of the Witch-act that James had passed, was read out in the inn to an old man who disbelieved that it existed. He was a well-known poet with a permanent frown and fierce eyes, who was said to find fault with whatever he came across. Everyone present listened to what my master read, and this is what I heard: "If any person or persons shall use, practise or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil spirit to, or for any intent or purpose, or take up any dead man or woman or child out of his, her or their graves, or any other place where the dead body lies, or the skin, bone or any part of any dead person to be employed or used

in any manner of witchcraft, enchantment or sorcery or shall use, practise or exercise any witchcraft, enchantment or sorcery, whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined or lamed in his or her body or any part thereof, every such offender is a Felon without benefit of clergy." My master read further that the act did punish with imprisonment for the first offence. I learnt later that in Scotland boxes were placed in the churches to receive accusations. No doubt, any love-sick jilted wooer could accuse a pretty, young girl and made her suffer the tortures meted out to witches; and men could rid themselves of their opponents in this way. But in ordinary course old, poor unsightly women were mostly suspected by their very looks. "Torture of an aggravated form was used to extort confession, as it was believed that the devil protected his votaries from the effect of ordinary tortures. A special form of iron-collar, called 'the witch's bridle' was generally used." I heard that in witch's trials evidence of the wildest description was admitted, especially if sworn to by a professed witch- pricker. I learnt that a witch-pricker's business was to prick the alleged witch with a sharp instrument to find the *insensible* spot or "Devil's Mark". The punishment was generally burning.

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My friend, the beard of Hopkins told me one day in beard-language that he was sick of his master; sick of the persecution of so-called witches and sick of his master's heart of stone that could not be moved by the tears and cries of agony of the poor victims. How

terrible it was, I thought, that this man professed to be a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, the gentle, the humble, the compassionate, who would go in search of a single sheep that had gone astray, not to punish it for having gone astray, but to caress it and bring it back to the folk. We both beards agreed that it was the duty of Christians, Protestants and Catholic, to follow the example of Christ, and treat all human beings on earth, no matter of what religion, with tolerance and love and try to bring back to God those who had gone astray, with tenderness and compassion, and not brand them, torture them and kill them; and we both were sure that those who called themselves Christians in these days were worse than barbarians and had not an ounce of true Christianity in themselves. Thinking hard I decided that this witch-hunting had nothing to do with Protestantism which was like a sapling, struggling desperately to keep itself alive in face of orthodox elements of Catholicism that with over-whelming force attacked its growth everywhere. James I himself was a representative of those orthodox elements of ignorance and superstition.

One day my master strolled about in a village, poking his nose in this and that to smell out a witch. I was surprised to see that he met the old poet here who, I heard, lived here with his elder sister. The two men engaged in a conversation, and while they talked, the poet's white beard told me that his master had known that the witch's act existed, but that his sister had requested him to find out what the most

important section of the act contained. I heard that this was because she lived in fear of the witch-finders since she was old, decrepit and unsightly and resembled a poor aged woman who lived in the village and was called by street-urchins: "Old Witch Pimple." After some time my master took leave of the poet and went to a small wood near-by where he strolled about in quest of witches. I got a shock when I saw an old woman collect dry sticks not very far away, as I knew she would be suspected of being a witch. My master went and rebuked her for picking up sticks that did not belong to her. The woman thus addressed, let go her apron so that all the sticks fell out, and stared at my master. Only now I saw how unsightly her appearance was. Her nose was sore with pimples, her eyes red and watering, her skin shrivelled and yellow, her under lip hanging and from her open mouth protruded a single large decayed tooth. Her head was bare with but a few white strands of hair. Her frame was emaciated, crooked and shaking. A pitiable sight she was; but there was no pity in my master's heart. He followed the woman who was lame and with difficulty reached the village where she lived in a tumbledown hut. My master enquired what she was doing and what was her name. The villagers said she was called "Witch Pimple" and she earned a pittance by washing clothes for the poorer people of the village. She was also sometimes helping on a small farm nearby, where she fed the cows and geese. My master took lodging with a monk in the village, with the object of watching the doings of the poor, old

woman. I howled out to him that he should rather give a few coins to the wretched creature; but he never could hear me.

After a few weeks I heard that a cow had sickened at the farm where the old woman worked. Then my master went to the owner of the farm to find out what had happened. He learnt that the cow had been very healthy, but suddenly had become ill without rhyme and reason. After a few days the cow died, and there and then my master went and accused the old woman of having caused the death of the cow by witchcraft. Then the whole village was in uproar. People exhibited a morbid interest in the case. So many came forth to give evidence of her guilt, and a drunken butcher swore he had seen her ride on a broom-stick at night The poor, old soul was thrown into prison, groaning with agony at the injustice done to her. She was tortured in order to extort a confession. Hopkins was summoned to prick her body all over to find the insensible devil's mark. When nothing availed, they decided to use the water-ordeal. If she sank she was no witch. If she did not sink she was a witch, fit to be burned. But by now the woman was so famished and exhausted that she collapsed and died before they could drown her. The old poet had watched the trial with much anxiety. No doubt he feared for his own sister, and I was relieved when my master left the village. I felt ashamed to be the beard of such a man who appeared to me the devil incarnate. After having witnessed this revolting show, I knew that the Hydra of Cruelty had

returned, not with a hundred but with a thousand heads. For a long time I seemed to hear the cries of mercy of the condemned woman in my ears; for a long time I heard the brutal laughters of the sportsmen at the inn in my ears who had enjoyed my master's story of the trial of the "witch" in the spirit of an excellent joke. For a long time I seemed to see the eyes of a monk at the inn; eyes that began to glow with celestial zeal on hearing that yet another enemy of Christ had been destroyed.

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After some months my master re-visited the village where he had found the alleged witch. The clergy had received an unsigned report stating that the sister of "Witch Pimpel" was hiding in the same village, and my master went to investigate. In the local Ale-house he had a drink and a chat with the inn-keeper for further information. But the sturdy old man said that the report was most probably a false one since no such person resided here. I came to know that the inn-keeper was a friend of the old poet as his beard told me that his master had helped the poet in the dead of night to take his sister away from the village to some far unknown destination, and that the poet lived now alone here. I was glad to learn that the woman had escaped the claws of the witch-hunter. My master was not satisfied with what the inn-keeper had told him. He went to the monk with whom he had lodged formerly, and let him see the report that the clergy had received. The monk said that the sister of the poet resembled the witch somewhat, but she was laid up now, never stirred

out and took no interest in the village life. Being the sister of the poet it was concluded that she could not be the sister of the witch, and the pursuit was dropped.

I heard that the persecution of witches was practised all over Europe and that in Germany the number of victims exceeded that in any other country. I heard also that women with beards were in great danger of being branded as witches, as one evening my master went to a theatre with a friend to see a play called: "The Merry Wives of Windsor", written by one "Shakespeare" who, they said, was the greatest dramatist that ever had lived. In one act I saw on the stage a very fat, old man who had disguised himself as a woman. He was beaten by a jealous husband and I heard another man say: "By yea and no, I think the woman is a witch indeed. I like not when a woman has a great beard. I spy a great beard under her muffler." From these words I gathered that old women with beards were looked upon as witches. I had never seen a woman with a beard in England, nor in Italy. But I had come across one in Cordova in Abd-ur-Rahman's time. I remember that my master, who was then a Moslem poet, had spoken to her one day, and asked her who she was. She was a very old poverty-stricken disfigured woman with a straggling beard on her chin, but I had not the courage of talking to her beard since I could not say whether it was a male or female beard and I feared to use the wrong address. I noticed that nobody laughed, scorned or suspected her of malice.

My master reported her case to the authorities with the result that she was sent to one of the houses which had been built for the purpose of giving shelter to destitute old people which were fed and clothed there and properly looked after. I had heard that among ignorant Moslems a superstitious fear of what was called "The Evil Eye" prevailed. Envy as well as praise could do harm to a person. But this was not put down to witch-craft, nor would any Moslem State entertain the idea of passing a law by which a person could be persecuted as a witch, since it stood to reason that no proof could be obtained that the harm done to a particular person was caused by a certain individual's power to do so. I remembered that "Lorenzo", the friend of my master in Italy, had explained the proceedings at Moslem Courts and what evidence was required to convict a person. He had told him also that wild imaginary testimony of witnesses were excluded and were never admitted. I looked upon the entire business of witch-hunting as a mental disease that swept all Europe. Some kind of pestilence for which at present no physician was available. I had seen and was to see in future that these strange outbursts befall countries now and again and are sometimes, the fore-runners of great health-giving reforms.

I had not seen the old poet for a long time at the famous sportsmen inn, and I was surprised when he appeared there one evening. He was attired in a flowery doublet, lace-collar and cuffs and loose short breeches. But he carried no sword as the others

did. He sat over his tankard of Ale, silently brooding. Deep dismay in his eyes he watched the frivolous assembly with growing annoyance. I wondered why he came here at all when he disliked so much this rough company, especially now when he had brought his sister into safety. My master had drunk a lot and was in a vulgar mood. He carried on a conversation with the sportsmen and said Hopkins had found thousands of witches and sent them all to their doom. Hearing this, the crowd burst into brutal laughter, drinking the health of Hopkins who was not present on this occasion. My master then called upon the poet to entertain them with some jests in rhyme, pertaining to witches and witch-craft. His idea was applauded by most of the company; but the poet refused to do so. Then they pressed him and my master even threatened him. At this the poet got up and walking over to my master with defiant attitude, he said: "I see thou hast drunk more than thy fill... I never yet set eyes upon a witch who was a drunken beast." At these words my master cried wildly: "It befits ye not to side with witches, the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ!" The poet came closer and cried savagely: "Enemies of Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ had no enemies, because he loved his enemies!.. but thou art the enemy of the Lord!" His face had assumed a purple hue and he breathed heavily. At his words my master jumped up and drew his sword. "Blasphemer!" he yelled. But the poet swiftly drew a dagger from his doublet and before my master could use his sword, he drove the dagger deep into his chest. A great tumult arose. Tables and benches were

upset. Tankards rolled on the ground which became in a few second a sea of wine and beer. I heard shouts of: "Traitor! Enemy of the King and the Holy Church!" I could see nothing, as my master had collapsed, his face and beard touching the ground. I heard the poet's voice: "Ye Villains! I am a Puritan and the Puritans will punish ye! out on ye rats!" I could make out that the poet fought valiantly. It seemed the crowd had taken sides, one side favouring my master and the other the poet. I heard clashing of swords: benches and chairs were hurled: there was crash on crash. I heard the voice of the inn-keeper howling and demanding money for his damaged tankards; his wife shrieked with terror, and another voice cried: "The guards! the guards! here come the guards!" Then suddenly there was a heavy thud and a long groan. I knew that the poet had been killed. Poor beard that I was; my hair was soaked with beer; not that I feared to get drunk, but I hated the smell of beer.

When my master was picked up, it was found that he was dead. I praised my luck of having got rid of him. No longer would I have to be a 'red' beard and witness the gruesome spectacles of witch-burning, and I hoped fate would bless me with a nobler master in my next life.

CHAPTER XI

Purification and Corruption

This time I had not to wait so long for my re-birth. Hardly twenty years had elapsed when I became aware of being the beard of a pleasant young man in the same country where I had lived before. My master was the nephew of a scholar whose name was "Jacobi," who had adopted him as his son when his parents had died in a tragic accident several years ago. The scholar lived near London. His residence was a very stately place surrounded by a beautiful garden, giving evidence of the wealth of the owner who was not only absorbed in the philosophy of all the ages but in languages, history and physical science. One of his rooms looked like a library and curiosity-shop combined. Another one resembled a laboratory. He had requested his nephew to take up the study of physical science, but my master had a predilection for novel-writing in which he seemed to excel, for he was on the way of becoming quite well-known.

From the conversations of uncle and nephew I made out that the forefathers of the family had

been Jews residing in Italy. Several centuries ago they had settled in England. Later on they had become naturalized and had embraced Christianity. Nothing reminded that uncle and nephew were of Jewish extraction, excepting the black beard of the scholar which was a proper Jewish beard. My master's beard, that is, myself, was not a Jewish beard. According to its shape it was called a 'Van-Dyk' beard, starting its growth beneath the underlip and proceeding to a long pointed tuft. I had insisted on coming out all round the chin and cheeks, but my master shaved those parts, ever reducing me to the Van Dyk tuft.

I heard that the son of King James, Charles I was reigning in England now, and that the country was preparing for civil war. There was much confusion everywhere as King Charles was ready to fight the Parliament. The soldiers of his army were called 'Cavaliers' and were supposed to be invincible. Those people who belonged to the King's party were styled 'Royalists', and non-Royalists were called Parliamentarians. I noticed that my master had many Royalist friends and was in love with the sister of one of them. She was a very pretty girl and her name was 'Rosalind'. Jacobi knew about my master's attachment; but said he would never give his consent to the marriage because the girl belonged to the class of tyrants. My master had long arguments with him, and on such occasions I learnt that King Charles like his father, believed in the divine right of kings, and that a king could do no wrong and was above

the law. I heard that he taxed the people without the consent of the Parliament and those who failed to pay, were thrown into prison without trial. He promised one thing to-day and broke his promise tomorrow. He could not be trusted, and the people resented to have a ruler whose word could not be relied upon. I heard that the people united against him and compelled him to sign a declaration called: "The Petition of Right". But hardly had he signed it, when he violated it again. He behaved like a tyrant and the patience of the people was exhausted at last with the result of civil war.

I heard that those people who called themselves "Puritans" feared and hated the Roman Catholics. They knew that the Queen of Charles was a Roman Catholic. Moreover, the Bishop "Laud" was his friend and the people believed that the King and Bishop would drive them back to Popery. I saw that people endeavoured to live according to the true teachings of Christ, free from the poisonous weeds of superstitions and falsehood.

Soon I came to know that one "Oliver Cromwell" was the powerful leader of the Parliamentarian army, and I heard also of a Scotish National Covenant or "Solemn Oath" by which all ranks and classes promised to stand by each other and resist the ecclesiastical tyranny to which the King and the Bishop Laud were compelling them to submit. Jacobi said that Charles had been furious on hearing of the "Solemn Oath" and had termed it "the Damnable Covenant." On this occasion I learnt that those who

were called "Presbyterians," had still a system of priests and prelates, and that the Covenanters demanded the abolition of Episcopacy and all prelates. They called themselves the *Root and Branch* party. From the talks of Jacobi and his nephew I gathered that the King had engaged in two Bishop wars, but had been defeated, after which the Bishop Laud had been imprisoned. The King had dissolved the Parliament many years before and had ruled with his ministers without Parliament in a despotic manner. At length the civil war broke out, and England was divided into two hostile camps. That of the Royalists and that of the Parliamentarians.

One day my master asked his uncle whether he thought the Covenanters were doing the right thing in abolishing Episcopacy, whereupon the scholar said: "Indeed, they are doing the right thing, and in that way I admire the Moslems who say: 'there is no need of priesthood in religion'. I think neither Jews nor Christians need priests. I have studied the question for many years my boy. I am a free-thinker, a rationalist, and I have come to the conclusion that the movement which we have here now, is the first attempt at democratization of society. At the same time Cromwell tries to break down the one-man-rule, giving every member of society a right to think and have a say in the matter. In short socialization and individualization are advancing side by side. This movement was first initiated by the Prophet of Islam." Here Jacobi raised his voice and said with emphasis: "There shall be no more privileged individuals or

privileged classes. All men are equal before the Law." My master sat with open mouth. He had believed that his uncle was an avowed Presbytarian, and I am sure he had not expected such a speech from him. I imagined that he thought his uncle was not only a free-thinker and a rationalist, but was a Moslem. At this moment Jacobi's Jewish beard started a conversation with me in beard language. He told me that his master in his youth had visited Sicily in search of old manuscripts. In Palermo he had made the acquaintance of a scientist of Arab descent. Both men became intimate friends. They met every day and discussed most important subjects for many months.

I reflected on all I had heard. I saluted the brave Covenanters in their sincere efforts to purify the form of their worship; a purification which progressed steadily, helped by the spirit of Islam, of which they were quite unaware.

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Jacobi and his nephew had been to a show, and coming home, they went to the curiosity-shop-library where the man-servant had laid supper. Partaking of lobster and wine, they discussed the play they had seen which had not been to the taste of Jacobi.

On a small table close by I saw a clay model of Buddha in meditative posture, and a quaint little figure, painted blue. My master, seeing it, enquired what it was supposod to be. Jacobi said it was a Hindu idol. He told his nephew that it had held a flute which was broken off. I heard that the name

of the deity, which the idol represented, was *Krishna* who was worshipped by Hindus. Krishna lived about 3000 years ago. He was a great prophet, but after his death, the people formed idols of him and worshipped him as a god. Jacobi said Krishna was born by the Virgin *Devaki* in a cave, his birth being announced by a star He performed miracles and was transfigured before *Arjuna*, his most beloved disciple. He was nailed to a tree but rose from death and ascended to Heaven. My master was aghast on hearing all this, and asking his uncle what it all meant, Jacobi said that there had been similar stories in history which symbolically explained the course of the sun in heaven and the changes of vegetati·n on the earth; in short, the birth of spring and summer, the suffering of the fading vegetation in autumn, the death of all vegetation in winter and the re-birth and resurrection of all life in the following spring. But in truth Krishna represented the aesthetic period in India. He played the flute divinely; he was all music and dance and beneath his touch "Beauty" sprang to life. But people will create idols of every prophet. "Yes," he continued, "there is still a lot of idolatry in the world. I admire the Covenanters who will not tolerate idolatry in any form. They refuse to recognise a privileged personality and in the pale of Islam, law applies equally to each individual. All the same in evolution of humanity the conservatism of the past days drags on for a long time, as we saw here too that the Presbyterians were inclined to follow the ways of the priests. It took some time before the idea could be thoroughly absorbed by the

people who had the tradition of a privileged class and *a king anointed by the Lord*. It is now only that for the first time the new idea has taken shape that the Covenanters will not recognise priesthood and king in the same way they did before. We have seen that in England Latin liturgy was discarded as being the language of the privileged priests. Owing to Islam's democratizing influence, Latin had broken down in Italy too and a new popular language called 'Italian' had taken its place. In India the language of priesthood is *Sanskrit*, and we know very well that the Moghul Emperor *Jahangir* is ruling there now. I predict that it will not take long before Sanskrit gives way, or has most probably already given way, to a new popular language which owes its existence to the same influence as that in Europe."

Jacobi's prediction had come true already in the time of Akbar the Great. The priest language had actually vanished and a popular language had taken its place. I remember I heard an Indian poet say that the poetry of the Indian *Tulsidas* and *Surdas*, and the Italian poetry of *Aristo* and *Tasso* were representatives of the Indian and Italian Ranaissance respectively in their democratic dialect. This was sufficient proof for me that the spirit of the Renaissance was entirely Islamic.

Evidently my master wished to change the topic now. He looked at a formidable marble bust of Plato on a pedestal in one corner of the room, remarking that the philosopher must have been handsome in his youth. Jacobi smiled asking him whether he had

read Plato. "To some extent," answered my master. Then his uncle commenced to talk and I heard that the ancient Greeks represented that time in human evolution when the activity of the mind had started. The practice of thinking had come into being. The mechanics of the intellect had come into play. He said acrobatism of logic to argue for arguing's sake was in vogue. He praised Plato's stress on thought and idea as it was new and helpful, but said it unfortunately did not take us far enough. He disliked Plato's assertion that idea was a transcendental reality, identical with God, and said thought and idea were mere *resultants* evolving in the same way as everything else. There are primitive, vulgar, stupid and false ideas which had nothing to do with God and the supreme good. Then Jacobi pointed out that Plato thought that the stars, planets and earth were gods; that "man was the paragon of creation on earth, for whom everything on earth was made; that plants were formed to nourish him; that he was the first-born son on earth and the epitome of the macrocosm; and that animals were created to receive the sinful souls of man after death." All these were megalomaniacal ideas. But when Plato said that woman was a degeneration of man and that fallen souls of men would after death enter animals or women, this idea was a primitive one, displaying great ignorance. So much practice of logic, thought and idea could not open Plato's eyes to the simple law of heredity and make him see that degenerate women must give birth to degenerate men, in which by chance, men like he himself might be involved.

My master smiled now as he found his uncle's talk more interesting and he listened with greater attention when he explained Plato's cosmology. I heard that Plato thought the earth was at perfect rest in the centre of absolute space-with the whole of the universe revolving round it. I thought this idea was part of Plato's megalomania. Afterwards Jacobi discussed Plato's 'Republic'. In his opinion Plato had done great harm by introducing into his ideal state what was called the *Magnificent Lie*, which had corrupted the political and religious system of Europe for centuries. The rulers of Plato's Republic were to establish and teach a religion in which they did not believe themselves, just to keep the people quiet and prevent revolt. I heard that the Italian writer *Niccolo Machiavelli* had based his work "*Il Principe*" upon Plato's Republic, the import of which had been handed on to the Romans who formed their states-craft after it, which in turn became Machiavelli's model. Discussing the 'Guardians' of Plato's Republic, Jacobi said that they resembled what was in Christian Europe the privileged class of the clergy. The guardian-women were identical with the Catholic nuns with the difference that while nuns vowed chastity and priests practised celibacy, there was to be a community of wives in Plato's Republic according to which Guardians could mate with Guardian-women without making them their wives. These men had wives in common without becoming husbands or caring for their children which were taken away from their mothers and brought up in common! Plato's Republic therefore destroys the family, "the Great Nurse of Morals."

Here my master interrupted his uncle and said: "Nay, I would not like to become a citizen of such a Republic. It appears, the ideal state was lacking sadly in morals. I trust it was a democracy not based upon equal rights of man, but upon unequal rights of some kind of creatures without the need of higher emotions and noble sentiments." "Quite right," agreed the Scholar. "Besides, ancient Greeks were of very jealous disposition, wherefore they caused their women to dwell in strictest seclusion, not allowing them even to peep from the lattice. Not one of those men would have voted for Plato's Republic; and their wives would have condemned the ideal state because of the debasement its system would have inflicted upon them, for indeed, a woman cannot be degraded to a more inferior position than 'to be shared' in such a manner."

I had listened with great amazement to Plato's extraordinary conception of an ideal Republic, and the Jewish beard of Jacobi said to me with a broad smile: "If this were super-wisdom it would be folly to be wise."

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My master had been invited to a society function. He had bestowed great care upon his toilet which displayed much elegance and excellent taste in the choice of material and colours. He favoured the waistless doublet and the graceful lace-falling band of the Cavalier style; knee breeches with gold ornamentation; a trailing cloak of red velvet, a black

large hat turned up on one side, adorned with a waving feather, and a sword, the hilt of which was inlaid with gold and hailed from Sicily. His long dark hair fell in soft ringlets on his shoulders; and his reflection in the mirror revealed to me how extraordinary handsome he looked.

In the fashionable drawing room then, where Royalists and their wives had assembled, he saw Rosalind at the side of her ambitious mother who, although a very wealthy widow, planned to give her daughter to the highest bidder in the royalist camp. But I knew that her desires were frustrated by Rosalind's love for my master. Her brother approved of his sister's love for his friend, and in face of such opponents in shape of her own two children, the mother was quite powerless. The misfortune was that the income of my master's literary activity was not yet substantial enough so as to enable him to support a wife in a fitting manner. He was still dependent on his uncle, who would have bestowed a fortune upon him had he agreed to wed a Puritan maiden. But my master was far from thinking in that direction. Hence he could do nothing but plead with his uncle again and again until he would deign to change his mind.

At that time something happened which sent a thrill of joy through my master's heart. The famous Poet *John Milton*, an avowed Puritan, had brought home a young wife who was the daughter of a Royalist. Encouraged by this news, my master

entreated his uncle more energetically to give his consent to his marriage with Rosalind, holding up to him Milton's example. But Jacobi smiled ironically and remarked that Milton had made a mistake and that nothing good would come of his marriage. It seemed he was right, for I heard, that after the honey-moon, Milton's wife went back to her family and refused to return to her husband.

Not long after, a bolt from the blue startled the citizens of London, for Milton, who desired a divorce, attacked the existing law of marriage. I heard that a pamphlet had been put forth by him, the title of which was: "*The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Restored, to the good of Both Sexes,*" declaring that: "*The Sacramental Sanctity* of marriage relation to be a clerically invented superstition." Arguing that incompatibility of character was sufficient cause for divorce.

The London clergy was furious. Indignation and wrath spread through the land. There was an outcry against Milton, and he was attacked with counter-pamphlets. A battle of pamphlets was fought, and the two hostile parties appeared to me like Royalists and Covenanters. All London was condemning the poet. Not so my master's uncle, who was delighted and praised Milton's courage, saying that the Islamic influence had made itself felt through the medium of Milton's person. I heard that never before divorce on ground of incompatibility of mind had been proposed by anyone in Christian Europe!

Milton was the first to proclaim what the Koran had said before. "Yes," said Jacobi to his nephew: "When I was young, a Muslim friend of mine in Sicily had explained to me that marriage was a sacred contract among the Muslims; but if a married couple could not agree, one member from the wife's family and another member from the husband's family were summoned to try their utmost to effect a reconciliation. If they failed, then the married people were to agree to part, and the Koran repeats and repeats, that they should not only agree to separate but should do so *gracefully* and *beautifully*. In this way the marriage contract was not being broken but was gracefully *dissolved*."

I heard that in the first compaign of the civil war the royal troops had the advantage. Then Cromwell said that he must have "men who have the fear of God before them, and would make some *conscience* of what they did, and that a few honest men were better than numbers." I heard that he enlisted a regiment of 1000 men. These men were called *Ironsides* and never were beaten. Cromwell and his valliant soldiers won victory after victory and the royal army was scattered at last like dead leaves in a gale on the field of *Naseby* on the 14th July 1645.

On that day I saw that Jacobi was jubilant, and when he saw his nephew, whose face was puzzled and dismal at the turn the battle had taken, he said to him: "It is plain that the qualities which the Ironsides display, are the same qualities that we have seen

in the small army of Tarik, the Muslim conqueror of Spain, and also in the handful of soldiers of Mohammed-bin-Qasim the conqueror of that part of India which is called Sindh, who, as strangers in the country fought against odds cut off by land and sea. In the same way the Ironsides fight only for principles for a righteous cause, without hope of personal glory. Indeed, we had seen that as soon as the enemy takes to flight, they cease pursuit, and never plunder or destroy green fields, never molest women, never are drunk, never kill old men and women from sheer revenge and never hurt even a child. They are God-fearing men to be sure, who would think of prayers on the battle field even, never losing sight of God. They clearly are a reflection of the early Muslim armies."

News came that the wife of Milton had returned to her husband meekly and obediently after the defeat of the royal army. I heard that the ambitious mother of Rosalind had received a shock as well, and it was not very long before the widow let herself persuade by her son to go over to the Puritan party. Having made sure of this, Jacobi gave his consent to the marriage of his nephew and Rosalind, which was solemnized with much splendour. Jacobi was charmed at the sight of the lovely, modest damsel which was henceforth to be his daughter-in-law. I could see that he repented for having been so cruel as to let the lovers pine for so many years. But then, he had not seen Rosalind before, and now when he saw her for the first time she appeared to him like a gentle Puritan maiden. It seemed impossible that she

belonged to the class of tyrants. I knew that the girl had excellent qualities. She was virtuous and gentle. Nevertheless, in her conversations with my master I had heard that she was a Catholic at heart, but a Catholic who looked with tolerance and compassion on all those who professed a faith different from hers.

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Owing to the magic touch of Rosalind, the whole house of Jacobi had been transformed and wore a different aspect. She looked herself after everything and created order and harmony out of disorder and discord. She instructed the servants who loved to obey her, and Jacobi was delighted with the changes she introduced. Visiting friends, mostly mild Royalists, who professed Puritanism after the battle of Naseby, were astonished and pleased at many alterations they saw in the house. None of them was aware what Jacobi harboured in his heart. None knew to what religion he really belonged. He was put down by all, not as a rank Puritan, but as a Presbyterian of the old sort, while my master and his wife, who had been known to be Royalists, were believed to be still the same. Rosalind's mother lived with her son in her own house in London and seldom came to see her daughter.

Jacobi refrained from talking about Covenanters and Moslems in presence of his daughter-in-law, who had introduced prayers at meal-times in which only the Lord Jesus Christ was mentioned as the son of

God, who was the giver of all blessings. She loved to spend much of her time in the curiosity-shop-library, to put things in order, or to examine all the quaint articles which made the place look like a Museum. She wondered wherefrom Jacobi had brought all these things, such as old books, antique ornaments, shields, cardinal hats of early centuries, old coins, phantastic toys, wigs, miniature Egyptian mummies made of silver, enormous ear-rings and armlets set with precious stones, old brass-work, wood-carvings, Greek bas-reliefs, old fashioned goblets and drinking horns, shells, Greek sandals, turbans with jewels, ancient Chinese pictures, engravings, heavy tapestries, drawings and old paintings of early Italian masters, a number of first editions and shelf upon shelf of old manuscripts and books. It would be impossible for me poor beard, to enumerate all the strange objects to be found in this curiosity-shop-library.

Rosalind visited sometimes the laboratory, and once she found Jacobi there burning base metals in a furnace. He said he was trying to make 'gold', but it was so warm in the place that she could not stay long there. Another room, attached to the library, was always locked and its door was covered by a green curtain. Rosalind had requested Jacobi to let her have the key, but he told her the key had been lost and the room was empty. Not long after this, Jacobi's black beard winked at me and informed me in beard-language that the room contained a great treasure, but he did not tell me what the treasure was.

My master and his wife occupied beautiful appartments in Jacobi's residence, and the good scholar spared nothing to make the young couple as happy as possible. Rosalind knew how to sew; how to produce dainty embroidery; how to play on the harp and sing sweetly. She was fond of reading light verse and light novels; but she had no knowledge of philosophy, and had never studied learned books. Of late however, she had begun to take interest in, what she called, 'difficult books', and one day after luncheon her husband found her in the sitting-room in her easy chair with a number of books on a small table beside her. Jacobi rested on the sofa, smoking his long pipe, when Rosalind took up a smaller book and holding it up to her husband, who stood beside her, asked: "Is this a good book?" My master looked at its title and said: "This is *Don Quixote* by *Cervantes*; but it is neither a difficult nor an old book. It was published not so long ago. I have read it; it is a master-work." "Then I must read it," she said, opening the book. But Jacobi beckoned to his nephew to come over to the sofa and he said to him cautiously: "When Cervantes lay in prison he declared that Don Quixote's author was the Moor *Sidi Hamete ben Engeli*, and that the novel had originally been written in Arabic.

Meanwhile Rosalind had closed the book and had taken up a larger one. As she opened it she said joyfully: "Oh, this was written by *Avicenna*. My father's physician always praised the book, and talked about Avicenna. I suppose he was a Greek." Jacobi

had come over to have a look at the book. "No, my child," he said: "Avicenna was not a Greek; but we are in the habit of giving Greek names to everything, just as we have given to the philosopher *Ibn Roshd* the name *Averroes* which sounds very Greek. Avicenna who is called, 'the prince of physicians' was of Arab descent. His real name was: '*Abu Ali al Hussein Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sina*'. He was a Moslem and his work called 'the Canoon' on medicine is being studied in all the universities of Europe." Rosalind made a wry face and my master signed to his uncle not to proceed with his talk.

Since that day Rosalind had not attempted again to read a "difficult book" from the library. May be she thought that all those old books were written by Moslems. After all she had been brought up in the Christian faith and she knew that once upon a time crusades had raged against the so-called *Infidels*. She now occupied herself rather with the pedigree dogs of the house, the large Persian cats, the parrots and singing birds in cages, the swans on the pond and the flowers in the garden; while Jacobi refrained from talking to her about Moslems and Arabs and the books they had produced. He had told his nephew that he was a free-thinker, and I wondered what the belief of a free-thinker really was. I had heard that free-thinkers do not believe that Christ is the son of God. But I knew that inspite of this, many free-thinkers called themselves Christians, simply taking Christ as their true prophet, believing only in his prophethood but not in his divinity. I wondered

whether Jacobi was such a Christian, plus a great appreciation for Islam. Then I remembered what Lorenzo one day had said to Leonardo's servant whose beard I then was. He had declared that Religion was 'ONE' and that if people called themselves after a prophet in the manner of: Christ and Christians; Zoroaster and Zoroastrians; Buddha and Buddhists; Mohammed and Mohammedans, then there would be a plurality of Religion which was wrong. Therefore the Prophet Mohammed had called the 'One' Religion "Islam", and had said that he had not brought Islam, but Islam was the One Religion of the universe which had been preached at different times by different prophets. Therefore, people believing in the One Religion "Islam" must believe in all the prophets that ever had appeared in the world. I thought that if man could believe in this way, then all the difference of Religions would disappear and their spiritual values would merge *into one* grand faith of the universe.

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In all his battles Cromwell relied only upon God. I heard that before every battle he spent often the whole night in prayer. His victories were always rapid and amazing. Oh, how I longed to have a peep at this Hero! My wish was granted one day when my master and Rosalind had gone to a distant country place to stay for a few days with friends. Walking through a cornfield on a bright summer afternoon, they saw a man on horseback coming along the field-path. His horse was pacing lazily and the rider seemed lost in thought. He had dropped his reigns, letting the

animal go whither it wished. My master whispered to Rosalind that the rider was Cromwell. We had caught him at a peaceful moment. As he came near, I marked that his attire was of strictest simplicity. He was so absorbed in thought that he failed to notice the couple by the wayside. Trembling with joy I looked in his face. It seemed hewn out of iron expressing unique single-mindedness and resolution, the very embodiment of earnestness. Yet, there was something so infinitely tender and compassionate in his face which I never could describe. I wondered not at the prodigious admiration of Milton for the powerful personality of Cromwell.

I heard that the king had fled to the Isle of Wight. There he made a secret treaty with the Scots, by which they promised to invade England on his behalf and restore him to the throne, while he in turn had to promise to ratify the Covenant. Soon I heard that a second civil war had started. In all parts of the country the Royalists rose in revolt. Cromwell met the Scotch invaders at *Preston* and wrecked them completely. After this, Charles I was brought to trial and was beheaded in front of Whitehall on the 30th of January 1648.

They said that by this act England became a Republic, without king or house of Lords governed only by the residue of the "long Parliament" called: the '*Rump*'. John Milton was the first Englishman of consequence outside the Parliament who attached himself openly to the new Republic. "He was offered,

and he accepted the secretaryship for foreign tongues to the council of State of the new Commonwealth." Later on he had his official quarters in Whitehall where he came in close contact with Cromwell.

When Rosalind heard of the king's execution, she was upset. But Jacobi told her that the verdict against him had been that he was a tyrant, a murderer and a traitor to his country. He told her that he had caused innocent people to be whipped, mutilated and imprisoned for life. Hearing of all the cruelties and injustices he had committed, she said that his removal was a blessing for England.

Cromwell had given his attention to Ireland, because that whole country had risen in open war against the Commonwealth. I heard that first he had invited the inhabitants to submit peacefully, "giving a promise of inviolate protection in their just rights and liberties," and although the Irish opposed and fought, after his conquest Cromwell did not revenge himself for their disobedience but he kept his promise "for the result of Cromwell's conquest and government in Ireland were a general peace and prosperity, admitted even by his bitterest enemies, to be without example in the previous history of this mis-governed country." It was a fact that Cromwell never attacked a foe without being provoked or threatened by him. Even then he first tried to settle the matter peacefully. If he failed in this, he subdued the enemy without bearing him any rancour afterwards. I remembered that those were the War Ethics of Islam,

and I perceived that the Islamic Spirit once again had made itself felt in the person of Cromwell.

It was said that all the powers of Europe had witnessed with horror the grim spectacle of the execution of king Charles. England was looked upon as the criminal among nations. Yet in their hearts was fear and they were anxious not to provoke Cromwell as they knew they could not conquer him.

It was known that the work of Milton was at present of mere miscellaneous character. The Commonwealth looked to him for everything in the nature of literary assistance. He had to examine suspected papers and interview their authors. Milton was longing for work and work arrived quite suddenly, as the greatest scholar of his time, *Salmarius*, had attacked the Commonwealth in defence of the exiled Royal family. His book was meant to annihilate the Commonwealth. But Milton rose to frame a reply to it. With all his might he threw himself into this task and in 1651 his Latin: "*Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*" startled the world and was hailed throughout the British Isles and the Continent as a death-blow to Salmarius. Thus, the worst antagonist of the Protectorate was vanquished. But other troubles arose.

News came that Charles II had arrived in Scotland and had been crowned at *Scone* on the first of January 1651. He was obliged to sign the Covenant, and adopt the austere manners of the Covenanters. I thought this must have been a dreadful ordeal for him. I heard that an army was raised to attack the

Commonwealth. These were sad days for Cromwell, as the Scottish army, superior in numbers, lay well fortified between *Edinburgh* and *Leith.* Cromwell in vain triea to contact the enemy. Meanwhile his supplies ran out and his men suffered from sickness and cold, and when he fell back on *Dunbar*, the enemy cut off his retreat. Still I heard it say that: "Hope shone in him like a pillar of fire." His faith in God was rewarded, for when one day the enemy moved down the right wing for more open space, Cromwell saw his opportunity and decided to strike on the next day at sunrise. When his men at dawn were about to attack; "sun's beams suddenly broke out through the morning mist over the hills and sea." Then was Cromwell heard to cry: "Let God arise, let His enemies be scattered!" And then the army pressed forward sweeping away every resistance of the foe and "the Scottish ranks fell back in wild confusion wrecked and scattered in tumultuous flight."

Although Cromwell was now in possession of Edinburgh, I heard that he had fallen ill owing to exposure to wet and cold that he had been obliged to endure. I was relieved when it was announced that he had recovered and had defeated the enemy again. Hereafter Charles II left Scotland and marched into England, but pursued by Cromwell, his army was encountered at *Worchester* and "shivered into ruin with the last hope of Royalism buried." Cromwell then had said: "The dimensions of this mercy are above my thoughts. It is for ought I know, a crowning mercy."

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Milton's official duties were heavier now, owing to increased foreign correspondence. I heard that he suffered from ill-health and was getting blind rapidly. He left Whitehall and went to live in his Villa *Petty France* near St. James Park. He worked at home with assistants to whom he dictated his pamphlets and letters. His salary had been reduced from £ 288 to £ 200 a year. Hardly forty-four, Milton was totally blind and could not move out without being led by someone. The worst was that his wife died after the delivery of a third daughter, making him a widower blind and desolate with three daughters to look after. At that very time Rosalind gave birth to a second son, and my master and his uncle were grateful that she and the baby were doing well. The beard of Jacobi, which was getting very grey now, and I myself, we both took part in the family rejoicings, and we discussed the liveliness of the infant who was as beautiful as a cherub and much stronger than the first-born.

I heard that Cromwell had dissolved the intolerable 'Rump' Parliament at last, asking his soldiers to remove the Speaker and the 'Mace', saying: "Take away these baubles." But not without having first reminded the members of their injustices, delays and self-interests. His patience had been most praiseworthy. He could no longer put up with a parliament the members of which seemed to work contrary to everything good.

The world was beginning to appreciate the great work he was doing. His victorie in Scotland had

gained for him "the recognition of the Republic by the foreign states," who looked upon him with awe, admiration and wonder. Here was a man who was not making and breaking treaties, whose promise was a '*sacrament*'. Who was a moral force the like of which did not exist at the time in the whole of the world, which would bring freedom and peace to those who relied upon it, and misfortune and conflicts to those who refused to recognise it. And when Cromwell was installed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth at Westminster in 1653, when congratulations poured in from all the prominent Courts of Europe, Jacobi burst out in praise of Cromwell, exclaiming: "From now on not only the English people, but all the peoples of Europe will be able to bask in the glorious sun of the new Commonwealth. They will flock to be healed by the light and warmth of its justice, righteousness and sympathy, and prosperity will be the reward of those who have faith in the Protector."

This actually came to pass. All the countries of Europe looked for help to Cromwell. "Peace had been concluded with Sweden, Denmark and Portugal and a treaty with France was nearing its settlement. The chief aim of Cromwell was to create a Protestant league against Popery and uphold religious freedom." He commissioned Admiral Blake, who had won battle after battle at sea, to clear the seas of pirates and demand compensation from piratical states for the molesting of British merchants. When I heard this, I remembered an occasion when in the fifteenth century

Lorenzo had spoken to the servant of Leonardo. He had said that the young General Mohammed-bin-Qasim in the beginning of the eighth century had been sent by the Caliph to protect the peaceful Arab merchants along the coast of Sindh, who were being molested by pirate ships of a despotic ruler, were taken prisoners or killed. Mohammed-bin-Qasim had been sent to demand their freedom. This not being granted, he invaded and conquered the country with a handful of soldiers. I heard that he treated the people of the conquered land like brothers and sisters and that men and women wept when he was recalled. I had heard then that before the advent of Islam the freedom of the seas had been unknown. Force and lawlessness were practised at sea and the strongest brute won the day. Now again I perceived in the cry: "Freedom of the Seas!" the influence of Islam, just as in the cry of: "Freedom of Religion!"

At a time when toleration was considered to be foolish in politics and criminal in religion, Cromwell advocated *the rights of conscience*, and proclaimed all men answerable to God alone for their faiths. He desired freedom of religion and even recalled the outcast Jews to let them settle privately in London and build a synagogue. In this I recognised that the spirit of Islam worked through the medium of Cromwell's person, as I knew that freedom of Religion had been uttered for the first time by the Prophet Mohammed.

I learnt that Cromwell had started great reforms at home. He as well as all Puritans desired the

reformation of manners and in this connection Cromwell had said: "Make it a shame to see man bold in sin and profaneness. The mind is the man; if that be kept pure, the man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what difference there is betwixt him and the beast. He has only some activity to do more mischief." The court of Chancery was being reformed, and "wicked and abominable laws" were being abolished. I heard of ordinances against cock-fighting; horse-racing; all games of chance; duelling, swearing, drunkenness. No one needed to stand henceforth in the *pillory*, and no one was to be burnt at the stake alive. We both beards rejoiced at this last ordinance. We said that now the 'pyre of truth' was being kindled, to burn up all the rubbish of falsehoods and lies; the hollow bombast of self-aggrandizement, the rank mummified bogeys of pretence and hypocrisy; and the flames of the pyre of truth shone far out into the world and were greeted with delight by every truth-loving soul as a beacon sent by God.

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It was well-known that although Cromwell had great successes abroad, at home he was less successful, as the parliaments he summoned could not agree with his viewpoints, and he had no other alternative but to dissolve them again. Hence the burden of the government lay heavy upon his shoulders and his health began to suffer. Jacobi said the people were not ready for democracy. But I knew that Cromwell himself was laying the foundation of England's future

democracy and greatness. He was sowing the seeds that would open one day and bring forth blossom and fruit.

It was said that Cromwell had been offered the title of king several times, but he had declined it, saying: "A crown is a shining bauble for crowds to gaze at or kneel to." After he had given his final refusal, he was installed Lord Protector for the second time on the 26th June 1657, with increased powers. He was a king in all but name. Once again in my many lives I beheld a ruler who wielded absolute power like Abd-ur-Rahman in Moorish Spain, using this power only for the good and never abusing it. And once again I saw that the world marvelled at the spectacle of might and peace displayed by Cromwell's Commonwealth.

News came that Milton had married again. He seemed extremely happy with his young wife who was a very virtuous woman, having great affection for her blind husband. How terrible must have been his shock when she passed away after fifteen months in child birth, the baby dying too. I wondered at the misfortune of the poor poet who was not allowed to keep a loving soul at his side which could shed a little light into the darkness that surrounded him. Jacobi said that it looked as though Milton had been singled out for disappointments, perhaps as a price to be paid by him for his great gift of poetry. Jacobi then related to my master that Milton had tried to persuade Cromwell to drop his church policy. It had

been the poet's greatest wish that there should be no such thing as an established church or a state-paid clergy. There should be only voluntary pastors who supported themselves. He had at one time thought that Cromwell was of the same opinion, but after much consideration the Protector could not make up his mind to agree with Milton on this point. This must have been another great disappointment for the poet. I thought that the idea of having no established church and no state-paid clergy was neither Jewish nor Christian, and we two beards agreed that it was a purely Islamic idea. We both conversed in beard-language for quite a long time, trying to find out the poet's religion.

Rosalind was very fond of Milton's poetry. She said "there was such a profound Christian element in it." She often sat for hours reading; sometimes joined by her husband, and whenever he looked into the book with her, I peeped in as well and got a chance to educate myself a bit. I was often thrilled by what I read. Poetry of such power yet sweetness, I had never come across. One day my master read with Rosalind a poem which had been composed on the death of a child by Milton's first wife. In the poem the poet bewails the death of the infant, the "soft silken primrose" that winter had spied and killed with his icy kiss. He then asks the departed soul whether it had been a star that had fallen from heavens and quickly had been reinstalled, or whether it had been an angel that:

"Clad in human weed
Had come to earth to show
What creatures heav'n doth breed
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the world and unto Heav'n to aspire"

I thought these lines were very lovely. In the concluding stanza, having persuaded himself that the child is not dead, but lives somewhere else, the poet essays to stay the lamentations of his sorrow-stricken wife with the words:

"Then thou the mother of so sweet a child
Thy false imagin'd loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrow wild
Think what a present thou to God hast sent
And rendered Him with patience what He **lent.**"

Hearing this, I was struck by the similarity of a tale by the Arabic philosopher *al-Ghazali,* which Lorenzo in the fifteenth century once had related to the servant of Leonardo. It was an incident of historical value that had happened when the Prophet Mohammed had still been alive. Al-Ghazali makes the Arab Woman *Ramida* relate her own experience and this is what she said: "Our son *Salim* was sick. His father *Talha* had gone out and in his absence the child died. Returning the very same day, Talha enquired how the child was. I said that I had never seen him so well before. I had dressed better than usual, and when I brought his meals to him, he drew me to himself and we conversed. I told him that I

had lent some things to the neighbour woman and when I asked them back she started a wild row. Talha said that it was wrong and foolish of the woman to refuse to return what had been *lent* to her. Upon this I broke to him the news of Salim's death, saying: 'The child that God had *lent* to us as a trust, has been returned to Him'. Hearing this, Talha said calmly: 'From Him we come and to Him we return'."

From this story of Ramida, I knew that the idea in Milton's poem had travelled through al-Ghazali to Europe centuries ago.

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My master mentioned to his uncle that Cromwell had refused to appoint his son as his successor. On this occasion I learnt that already in the year 1655 Cromwell had expressed his opinion on this subject saying that if they had offered to make government hereditary, he would have rejected it, as men should be chosen to govern for their love to God, to truth and to justice. It was his wish that his sons should lead private lives in the country. But the people were anxious because Cromwell suffered frequently from severe attacks of fever, and it was thought that he might die without having nominated a successor. His continual refusals to appoint his son reminded me of what I had heard about the great Caliph *Omar* who, when asked to nominate his son as his successor, had told the people that his father's family had become responsible enough by his being Caliph, and there was no need to thrust the responsibility upon yet another member of his family. He

therefore refused to appoint his son as his successor, and he nominated a board of six persons to think well over the matter and then elect whom they thought the best. Here was another instance in which I did recognise the influence of Islam again in the utterances of Cromwell.

I feared that the Protector would soon succumb to the immense weight of work that rested upon him, as he had to govern alone without the help of Parliament. He had to struggle on, tackling every problem that came up, crushing the intrigues of enemies at home and maintaining England's prestige abroad. I saw that as long as it was in his power to wrestle with a thousand difficulties he would do so bravely; but when at last his favourite daughter Elizabeth died, he no longer could cope with the gigantic task before him and he broke down completely, as besides all other troubles and toils, he had wasted himself, watching at his daughter's bedside day and night. His great tenderness for his daughters, his respect and solicitude for his wife and mother; the justice he meted out to all women in general, assured me that he had raised the status of women and this gave evidence that he was a manifestation of the Islamic wave that swept England at that time.

When he lay ill at Hampton Court he was requested to nominate his successor, but a few days before his death no nomination had been made. Then it was said that before his second installation as Lord Protector he had nominated a successor in a sealed

paper which he had kept with himself. A messenger was dispatched from Hampton Court to fetch the sealed paper from Cromwell's study at Whitehall, but the paper had disappeared. I heard that one day before his death his son Richard had been nominated, but by whom, no one seemed to know

On the third of September 1658 in the afternoon, London was visited by a dreadful storm the like of which I had never experienced before. The strong solid dwelling of Jacobi shook in its foundations. Trees were uprooted by the tempest; houses collapsed; cloud-burst upon cloud-burst flooded the town; lightning in shape of large fire-balls whirled from above, and the roar of the thunder was enough to burst the ear-drums of every inmate of the house. The Jacobi family was huddled in the curiosity-shop-library. Jacobi sat with his back against the green curtain of the locked room. The crying children pressed against their mother Rosalind who in turn hid her face in the protecting arms of her husband, my master. The servants were present as well and even the dogs and the great Persian cats had been called in. I was sure men and animals did feel that this was the end of the world. During this raging storm on the anniversary of his greatest victories, Cromwell passed away. To me it seemed as though the thunder had re-echoed the triumphant guns of his conquest at Dunbar and Worchester that had made an end to every vestige of the Royalists. At the same time it was as if nature hurled lightning and thunder at the faithless people who had so little understood the

large spirit of Cromwell, and had failed to appreciate the great services he had rendered to them, and had made him toil beyond his strength by refusing to co-operate, and with their continuous wranglings and disagreements had brought him to an early grave. It seemed to me also as if this storm was the voice of a prophecy announcing to the people their well-deserved punishment that would befall them hereafter. The discords at home and the loss of prestige abroad through misgovernment and the immoral behaviour of their depraved king that would stain the purity of Britain with all the evils, the corruption and the vice he would bring with himself.

Jacobi shed tears hearing of the death of Cromwell, saying that the noblest of Englishmen had passed away; the most honest and sincere, the most selfless and ambitionless figure in English history. Cromwell's body was embalmed, and with great pomp he was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey.

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After the great storm it rained off and on. The leaves were falling fast; the flowers in the garden lost shape and colour and autumn approached in its coldest, bleakest mood. But in the curiosity-shop-library a bright fire was going and kept out the damp misty breath of autumn. Rosalind came often here with the children who liked to handle the quaint articles more than their toys in the nursery.

One night after supper, uncle Jacobi and his nephew sat in this cosy corner over a glass of wine

and a game of chess. We two beards watched them play. My master's hopes ran high and we were certain that he would win. But at the last moment the scholar pounced upon him and devoured him

After the game, the two men discussed the political situation of the country. I heard that Cromwell's son Richard, who was now Lord Protector, was not a success. He was not fit for the high office he had been entrusted with. Although he was morally sound, dignified and eloquent, he had not the strength of character of his father. He not only lacked will and resolution, but his mind was not in the business of governing. He was swayed by those who would have liked to rule themselves. Moreover, he was not a military genius like Cromwell The sympathetic ties that exist between the army and its general were absent; and there were rumours afoot that the army was not well disposed towards him, and Jacobi said it would not be long before he would have to give up the job, adding, that the restoration of the house of Stuart was quite possible. Then I heard my master speak rather joyfully: "That would be the best solution; after all Charles is our rightful king." "You are still a Cavalier," said his uncle reproachfully. "But when you hear whence came the name Cavalier you will be disappointed as it originated in the same sphere that had produced Puritanism" My master shook his head incredulously, but Jacobi proceeded.

"Every country in the world had tamed the wild horse and turned it into a domestic animal. In

ancient Rome, a man who could afford a horse bought one and perhaps a chariot too, to get about. The horse had no other significance but of being a useful commodity in peace or war. Not so in Arabia. Since the second century onward or even before, the Arab horse became the most beautiful, graceful, perfect and swiftest horse in the world. Horses in Arabia were the exclusive properties of the knights and nobles, who never even thought of mounting them for any peaceful journey or business. They were only used for knight errantry or conquests, or all such activities which concern chiefs. The horse and its Rider, the knight, were, so to say, one and the same thing called *Fars* and *Faris*. The horse was the principal adornment, support and symbol of greatness of a man of rank, and so we see that the name knighthood is derived from the horse. In no Aryan language the horse and its Rider are bound as if, in one single noun; as between *Fars* and *Faris* there is really no difference. Further more, every Arab scholar knows that *Furusiat* which is derived from *Faris* means chivalry and knight errantry. The Christian Spaniards have simply translated *Fars*, *Faris* and *Furusiat* and have used their name Caballo (Horse) as the peg whereon to hang their translations. So we got *Cabaleero*, cavalier, chevalier and chivalry."

The beard of Jacobi told me that my master, hearing all this, stared at his uncle with a mixture of dismay and admiration. I knew that he had great respect for his uncle's learning, although this revelation must have made him feel somewhat uncomfortable.

Once in the mood, the scholar went on pointing out to his nephew the great importance of Islam, the last and youngest of revealed world religions. He said hereafter no more revelations would visit the world, but only systems of philosophies based on Islam would flood the world, each claiming to be a perfect religion. Jacobi said that every prophet had come at a particular time with a message for further evolution, adding something to what had been revealed before. Moses formulated the law in clearer terms than his predecessors. Jesus came at a time when people were ready for a further advance beyond dogmatism, and Mohammed followed 600 years afterwards when East and West were ready for a further step in world evolution in which the whole of humanity would take part. Islam had come like a tremendous earthquake that had created a world revolution, initiating "*Evolution as a whole.*" An earthquake the tremors of influence of which were to be felt in the remotest corners of the globe. It is a foolish and vain effort on the part of prejudiced historians to attempt to hide the grand civilizations which the Islamic revolution had produced. It will nor avail them, for the eternal tide of Islam will advance more and more, carrying with itself every link of evolution from Adam onwards, proving that every religion is a link in the chain of evolution and that no tree can fall from the skies, but must grow from its seed.

Here Jacobi quoted passages from the Koran as follows: They say: "Be Jews or Christians, then will

ye be rightly guided." Say: "Nay but ours is the religion of Abraham, who found God after doubting Him." Say: "We believe in God and in that which is revealed to us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ismail and Isaac and the tribal prophets and that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to all the prophets from God without making any distinction between them."

Then Jacobi explained that there cannot be any distinction between the messages of prophets as they were given at particular times to a particular people and said no more than was necessary at that period. Jesus said more than Moses and Mohammed giving guidance to the whole of humanity said what is yet to be revealed by the Koran and has not yet been understood. At the same time he repeated all what his predecessors had said. Instruction about world evolution has been accomplished in the Koran. Humanity has received enough food to eat and digest. No more revelations are necessary only **realization** of that which has been given.

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I heard that after the death of Cromwell Milton had continued in his post and many letters of the new Protectorate to foreign countries were of his composition.

At first Richard carried on well, but the Army Chiefs, left by Cromwell, gave trouble and the political

discords and quarrels undermined his position, so that after about a year the Protectorate had come to an end. The old Rump Parliament had been restored to govern the country, and I heard that Milton revived his pet-theme, trying to introduce his idea of church reforms. But the Rump would not hear of it and could not be bothered with such matters since it had to wrestle with the Army Chiefs and the ghastly situation that had arisen. The country was plunged into confusion and anarchy so that for a time a Military Government came into existence. I heard that when the Rump had come back, Milton proposed a way by which a free Commonwealth could function. But his scheme only evoked laughter and ridicule. Up to the last Milton struggled to keep the Republic alive, but the royalist element had reared its head and the demonstrations of the people, demanding the restoration of the Stuart dynasty, assumed vast dimensions, and on the 29th of May 1660 Charles II triumphantly entered London. By this time the Chief Republicans had fled and Milton was in hiding.

Charles resolved to take vengeance and punish the regicides severely. Execution followed upon execution. Thirteen people were hanged and there was much burning of anti-royalist literature. The sacred body of Cromwell was exhumed and hanged in chains on the gallows. His head was stuck upon a pole and afterwards he was buried under the gallows.

Jacobi was horrified at this dastardly deed, that the body of a man of such greatness should have

been profaned in such a manner. Even the coffin of the brave Admiral Blake was thrown out of Westminster into a common churchyard.

I heard that Milton was on the condemned list and it is a miracle how he was saved. Perhaps heaven had decreed to spare him because he was yet to write his glorious immortal work "Paradise Lost". Moreover it was rumoured that Charles was of opinion that the greatest punishment for a man poor and blind was to prolong his life. So Milton was spared.

Jacobi wished to find his hiding place and go and console him in his desolation. His nephew was shocked hearing this, saying that such a move would label the family as anti-royalist. Jacobi had never voiced his religious views in public; no one knew that he was an arch Republican, Puritan, Covenanter or worse, and trying to contact Milton, would create suspicion in many minds. But Jacobi had his way. A friend of his who knew where Milton lived, took him one night. Both men went in disguise; but unfortunately neither my master nor I came to know what was the outcome of that visit, as Jacobi kept it strictly to himself.

After Milton had been pardoned and his name had been struck off the black list, he emerged from his hiding. He took a house in Jerwin Street and I heard that these were dreadful days of humilation for him. He was looked upon "as an infamous outcast, a detestable blind Republican and regicide who had by

too great clemency escaped hanging." I came to know that hardly any of his former friends visited him. Most of them thought it wise not to approach him so as not to be branded as anti-royalist by the new Government, for Royalty had returned in shape of Charles II and the crown was blazing with its former holy authority.

Jacobi often burst into wrathful comments. "Yes!" he cried "The merry Monarch has entered the city with pipes and drums, pomp, folly and vice; with his shameless court and his troop of mistresses all of which must get the best of everything, must be made duchesses and their sons must be created dukes ruling and humilating his Queen at court! Yes, the merry Monarch has come, granting libertinism to every freedom-loving soul that had been fettered to virtue, so that it might be able to jump, dance, run, haste and fly to its doom of corruption and condemnation! Yes, the merry Monarch has come, bringing with himself his own dissipated life, together with the return of high Episcopacy, mannerlessness and the suppression of everything decent, and the practice of anti-Puritanism in morals! Yes, the merry Monarch has come, trailing music, dance and wild colourful pageants, and trailing also the music and dance of *Black Death* and the wild pageants of fire and destruction!"

And raging in this way, Jacobi wondered why all this had to happen, and for what purpose Cromwell had come at all when everything that had been done was to be undone again by king Charles II. But I

knew that Cromwell had only sown the seeds of England's future Commonwealth and democracy. That the seeds would open and gradually grow without cessation beneath all the refuse and corruption which seemed to me nothing but some kind of *Manure.*

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Milton's troubles were aggravated by the fact that his three daughters, the eldest 17 years, refused to be of any help to him. The girls had remained almost uneducated and they resented to have anything to do with their blind father. They ridiculed the idea of reading to him or looking after him in any way. They were rude to him and undutiful and "they did combine together and counsel his maid-servant to cheat him in her marketings." They sold many of his books and would have finished them, had not a kind fate arrived in shape of a third marriage. I heard that the woman he married proved an excellent wife, who created order in the household. Encouraged and feeling more comfortable, Milton now undertook the composition of his "Paradise Lost" which, I heard, had been contemplated eighteen years before. But now, I thought, how great must have been his inspiration, although an inspiration of sorrow, since the loss of his Paradise namely "Puritanism" actually had taken place. This grand epic poem had therefore a genuine ring and its vigour and heaven-soaring sublimity could never be equalled by his later creation "Paradise Regained". I had a peep at both these poems later on when Rosalind reconciled to Milton, had taken to reading them often in company

of my master. "Paradise Regained" did not sound true to me. Only Satan, when he doubted and scorned everything good, noble and great, seems to have spoken the truth and perhaps reflected Milton's doubting, disappointed spirit.

I heard that although "Paradise Lost" had been concluded, it took a long time before it could be published. This was because of the great fire of 1666 and also because the official licenser could not bring himself at once "to grant the necessary imprimatur to a book by a man of such notorious republican antecedents."

I came to know that Milton sold his copyright to the publisher for £5, with another £5 to come after the sale of the first Edition, and an equal sum later on. When the book was out, it was hailed with exclamations of delight by the poet Dryden who said: "This man cuts us all out and the ancients too." Such enthusiastic praise from a poet who had embraced Catholicism and had become the chief poet of the Restoration had a dynamic effect on the public. Milton was again the brilliant star of former days. The clouds of disgrace that had obscured its light, had vanished. His house near Bunhill fields, to where he had moved, was a great attraction, visited by prominent people and well-known scholars who craved his learned company.

I heard that in 1669 the first Edition of "Paradise Lost" had been sold out, and the Poet received another £5 from the Publishers. Hearing this, Jacobi

said: "The world pays nothing for genuine value; what a shame that such an immortal work should have fetched no more than the price of a fashionable wig." He read the poem several times and one evening he had a quiet talk with his nephew in the curiosity-shop-library when Rosalind had gone to visit her mother in town.

Keeping "Paradise Lost" before him on the table, Jacobi asked his nephew: "Tell me what is the dominant element that runs throughout Milton's creation." My master did not reply at once. He was thinking hard and at length he said: "I believe it is 'Pride'." "You are right," agreed Jacobi and he continued: "The strange thing is, that nowhere in the Bible there is any mention that Satan used to be an Arch-angel who owing to his Pride fell and was driven out of Heaven. This is purely an Islamic conception, and here again we trace the Islamic influence in English literature. The Koran says that the Arch-angel, who by Moslem tradition is called '*Azaziel*', rebelled out of Pride against God's decree and was driven from Heaven to fill Hell with all those who were his followers. He is called '*Iblis*' in the Koran, meaning the 'despairing one'.

"Milton mentions Azaziel as being an angel, but makes him an associate of Satan. Azaziel cannot be traced anywhere in the Bible as an angel, nor in any myth or legend, Greek, Roman, Hebrew or Egyptian. The name Azaziel appears in old books solely in connection with a 'scape-goat'. Nowhere but in the Moslem tradition Azaziel figures as an angel who fell

through pride and received the name *Iblis*, which shows that like Dante, Milton made use of Islamic sources. A fellow scholar of mine pointed out to me that in making Azaziel one of the fallen angels, Milton simply followed medieval traditions. He is right; as we know very well that medieval times belonged to the Moslems and that their traditions were the very air the people did breathe. So no further proof is required. It is a pity that the antagonists of Islam will dish up any lie, but never go to truth which in this case is the very version in the Koran whence the saying: 'Through Pride the angels fell', has originated.

"Among other things, we are being referred to a legend that says Azaziel was, not an angel, but a wicked demon in the desert near Jerusalem. People who have studied these matters and think for themselves, know that the world has ever been peopled with demons and evil spirits and all kinds of legendary beings. They know that such myths have nothing to do with angels that fell *through pride*, which forms the chief idea in Milton's 'Paradise Lost'.

"Tracing the name *Lucifer* which Milton has given to Satan, we find that *Helel* was in Hebrew the morning star, and that translated into Latin the name 'Helel' becomes 'Lucifer', which means 'the Light-bringer'. That was certainly no angel, but was a star. The king of Babylon was compared with the morning star, and when he was defeated, it was said that the morning star had fallen from heaven. Then we are

being referred to the Bible Luke 10, 18 where it says: 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven'. But neither that he was an angel nor that he fell through pride is mentioned. Again we are being referred to the 'Revelations', but here we find nothing but falling stars.

"Another thing. In the Biblical version of Adam's fall it says: 'Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord had made'. There is not a hint in the Bible that the serpent was Satan in disguise, or had any connection with Satan. And when God curses the serpent afterwards, he says: 'Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life'. Nor a hint of Satan or hell is there! But in Milton's work we see that Satan takes the shape of a serpent to tempt Eve, exactly as in the Koran Adam and Eve are tempted by Satan, with the difference that, while Milton sticks to the Biblical conception that Eve was tempted first and received all the blame; in the Koran Adam and Eve both were tempted together, both fell at the same time, and were equally guilty, and in this again the Koran reveals the equality of man and woman, and Adam gets no chance to show his lack of chivalry by throwing all the blame on Eve as it is depicted in the Bible and which gave rise to the endless miseries woman had to endure through the centuries in Christian countries."

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Milton was now 60 years of age; but I noticed that he looked much younger whenever I had an occasion to see him on certain days of my master's visit to Bunhill. I saw that he was led about in the streets near his Residence. He was in poor health; "had lightish hair and fair complexion, and would sit in his garden at the door of his house in warm weather." I heard that he was very fond of music, and that "his manner with friends and visitors was extremely courteous and affable." It was said that he never attended church; "he belonged to no religious communion and had no religious observances in his family." His friends wondered at this because they knew that he had a deeply religious mind. But no explanation came forth to solve this mystery.

In 1671 "Paradise Regained," was published. Rosalind read it with great interest, and my master thought that Milton's religion was clearly revealed here. He told his uncle that some of his friends had said Milton was an *Arian*. Jacobi shook his head and remarked: "That is impossible. Milton has never professed to be an Arian. The followers of Arius of Alexandria had their churches and their paid priest-class. You will remember that Milton tried to persuade Cromwell to have no established church and no paid clergy. These two ideas are purely Islamic." "But what about Milton's faith in 'the only begotten son'?" asked his nephew, whereupon Jacobi replied: "The Muse of a poet has nothing to do with his religious convictions."

Milton suffered much of gout and in the end died of it in 1674 at the age of 65. Rosalind cried when she heard of his death and Jacobi said: "A great Poet and Puritan has passed away." Both, he and my master attended his funeral.

Jacobi was 79 at that time. My master was 50 and Rosalind was getting on too. Their children had grown into fine, tall young men. I was still the 'Van-Dyk' beard, though only a small grey tuft now, and my brother, the Jewish beard of Jacobi, was snow-white.

Some time after Milton's death, his posthumous Latin work: "Treatise of Christian Doctrine" appeared. I heard that in this Treatise it was revealed that Milton had been an anti-Trinitarian, and that: "he denied the coessentiality or coequality of Christ with absolute Deity, but regarded him as clothed with a certain derivative divinity of a high and unfathomable kind." I heard also that Milton believed in "*One* infinite and eternal Spirit as the self-subsisting God and Author of all being." The treatise contained a repetition of Milton's view on the marriage subject. Reading about the poet's denial of the coequality of Christ with absolute Deity, Jacobi said: "This belief of Milton is not a stray belief, but forms part of a number of other beliefs that are peculiar to that time, derived from the contact of Islam. Reformation, Protestantism, Puritanism and all the changes it brought into the faith of the Christian people are attributable to one influence, namely *the new learning*

of Islam, brought into Europe through Spain and Sicily. The main theme of that learning was that Jesus was a great Prophet, but a Prophet only, and a clear denial of his being part and parcel of God."

My master still protested, saying that the critics of the treatise state that inspite of everything, Milton was "at one with the great body of christianity." Then Jacobi said: "This may be so, although he never attended church and belonged apparently to no religious communion. Whatever he was, before all else he was a free-thinker and was very much under the influence of Islamic teachings. In short, he was an Islamized christian. Even now, the air we breathe is surcharged with this influence. The Koranic sayings were scattered like seeds throughout Spain, Italy, all Europe, and all the world. The Koran was translated into Latin not only in Moorish Spain, but in Italy and Sicily. Most writers knew Arabic. Even in our England some women knew Arabic if we come to think of Lady Jane Grey in the last century. Milton himself was master of Latin, Greek, Hebrew and perhaps Arabic."

When Jacobi had reached the age of 84 he began to feel very weak. He could not walk and was attended faithfully by Rosalind. One day he summoned his nephew and gave him a small parcel: "To be opened after my death," he said. As my master bent over him, Jacobi's beard whispered to me: "Farewell brother. Now you shall see the 'Treasure' soon."

At night Jacobi fell to sleep and never woke again. He left his great wealth to his nephew and family. Some time after the burial, my master opened the small parcel. It contained a key and a note saying: "This is the key for the 'locked' door." My master called Rosalind and together they went to unlock the door of the mysterious room next to the curiosity-shop-library.

"Ah!" they exclaimed, for a case of dazzling gold greeted their eyes. It rested upon a high pedestal that was covered with an ornamental plush-mat. They lifted the case and put it upon the low table that was placed against a wall of the room. My master pressed the clasp of the case and opened it. It contained a large book that just fitted into it. He opened the book, but it was not in English. "I can't read this," he said. "It looks like Arabic." I saw at once that it was the Koran, and that the plush-mat was such as Moslems use for prayer. "Take the book out," said Rosalind. My master followed her counsel and then examined the case in and out. It was of thick, solid gold. "What a Treasure," he said. "It must be worth a fortune." When he had opened the book I had caught a glimpse of some words that were written on the fly-leaf in Arabic, saying:

"'This is the only historical authentic book of revealed Religion in the world, in contra-distinction to all other mythical, legendary, biographical, philosophical works that go under the name of religions. Therefore this book is the greatest treasure that the world possesses."

Rosalind had possessed herself of the plush-mat and said: “I’ll put this infront of my bed.” My master closed the empty case and put it back upon its high pedestal like a golden calf to be worshipped at times. The Koran was taken to the library and put upon an obscure shelf there. The room that contained the “golden Treasure” was carefully locked again. “Indeed”, I said to myself, “For the world only the *case* and not the *substance* is of value.”

My master lived to see his children’s children, and died bewailed by his Rosalind whose cavalier he had been up to the last. I was still the Van-Dyk beard, but I had shrivelled into a tiny white tuft, and I was glad to get away to a new life.

CHAPTER XII

The Hydra of the Revolution, Napoleon, and Poetry

I was reborn in France at the end of the 18th century, at the time of the French Revolution. Oh! what cruel and disgusting scenes, yet what resplendent pageants I did witness here! On one side the wild furious mobs, the poverty-stricken populace crying for bread, and on the other side the abundance, the glamour, the frivolities, the pomp and glory of the royal court!

My master was a valet at the court of Louis XVI in the palace of the Tuileries at Paris. He was a member of the staff of footmen and valets, but his position was somewhat below the others. Nevertheless, he was a handsome young man of about 23 years of age. His mother had been German, his father French and his aunt, the wife of his father's brother, had come from England and had taught him English so that he could speak three languages now. He was quite well-educated as he came from a good family which by some misfortune had been deprived of

position and wealth. His name was *Georges* and I was his very small but well-trimmed beard of soft light-brown colour. He was tall and well-built and looked very smart in his livery, and *Jaqueline*, a chambermaid attached to the Queen's household, was in love with him and he with her. She was a young, pretty girl of 17 with hair of reddish gold-hue. Queen Marie Antoinette liked her fresh, natural disposition and her lovely hair and she had taken a fancy to the girl who was as carefree and playful as she was herself. She used her when she dressed up as a shepherdess and in the park drove white sheep before her, or when she became a dairy-maid in a thatched farm arranged for her pleasure. Jaqueline and a few other chosen girls became dairy-maids too and there was no difference between them. The Queen played with Jaqueline as two children would play together. She bestowed trinkets and pretty dresses upon her and she raised her position at court. But I saw that my master disliked all this, as he noticed that his Jaqueline was getting proud not only, but that she attracted the attention of gallants and courtiers which made him very jealous. I heard him trying to presuade Jaqueline to go away with him saying that a terrible revolution was on the way; but she said she would never leave her Queen.

I noticed that the king was a very good-hearted ruler, kind and sympathetic; but he was weak and listened to bad advices. He spent his time in hunting, and there were nothing but pleasures, feasts and dancing at court, while the people had nothing to eat.

I heard that a certain writer called *Rousseau* had written a book called "*Social Contract*" in which he said that civilization was all wrong. That the poorer classes were deprived of their natural rights by the rich who promised to protect them, only to get power and make them slaves. He suggested that everybody should make a Social Contract by which the will of the people should prevail and not the will of the king. When I heard the words "Social Contract" I remembered what I had heard from Lorenzo about the day when the Prophet Mohammed had inaugurated the Social Contract in Mecca and I knew that the writings of Rousseau were an echo of that. I noticed that the French public had taken up this phrase; it was in every body's mouth and had become very popular.

I came to know that two noble-men named *Mirabeau* and *Lafayette,* had seen a lot of good in what Rousseau had preached and desirous to improve the condition of France, had advised the king to summon an assembly of the three Estates consisting of, the nobles, the clergy, and the commons, to consult the possibilities of better arrangements, for the king had very little money owing to misgovernment and wars.

I saw that the people became hopeful again when the elections took place to form the State-General which was afterwards called the 'National Assembly'. The masses now were allowed to vote and have a say in matters of government.

I knew that my master's brother had got a job as a clerk in the Assembly, and it was through him that I came to know what was going on there. He communicated everything to my master, and one night he brought a copy of the charter the Assembly had drawn up. When my master read it, I read it too, and I saw the following:

No. 1: All men are born and continue free and equal in rights. Social distinctions are purely conventional.

No 2: Society is an association of men to preserve the natural rights of men.

No. 3: Sovereignty resides in the nation; all authority vested in an individual or body of men comes expressly from the nation.

No. 4: Liberty is the power of doing what we will, so long as it does not injure another; the only limits to each man's natural rights are such as secure the same rights to others. These limits are determinable only by the law.

No. 5: The law can forbid only such actions as are mischievous to society. "Quod lexnon vetat permittit."

No. 6: Law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have a right to take part, through their representatives, in the making of the laws. Law must be equal for all. All citizens have equal rights, according to their fitness, to fulfill all offices in the state.

No. 7: Accusation, arrest, detention can only be in accordance with the law which all are bound to obey.

No. 8: The law must be reasonable. It must not have any retroactive force.

No. 9: *Everyone is to be deemed innocent till he has been convicted. Persons under arrest on suspicion must therefore be treated gently.*

No. 10: All men are free to hold which religious views they will, provided they are not subversive to public order.

No. 11: Freedom of speech, of writing and printing is one of the most precious of the rights of man.

No. 12: A public force is needed to guarantee the rights of man. Such a force is for the benefits of all, not of its own class.

No. 13: To support such force, a common contribution is necessary; it is to be equally laid on all citizens according to their means.

No. 14: All citizens have a right to show that such public contribution is necessary, to consent thereto, to arrange its application, its incidence, its manner of ingathering, its duration.

No. 15: Society has a right to demand from every public servant an account of his administration.

No. 16: A society, the rights of which are not assured, the powers of which not definitely distributed, has no constitution.

No. 17: *Property being an inviolable and sacred right*, no one can be deprived of it, save when public necessity, legally established, evidently demands it, and then only with a condition of a *just and previously determined indemnity*.

I was struck when I heard all this, as it seemed the very charter of Islamic law. And the words: "*Property being an inviolable and sacred right*" were the very echo of the Prophet Mohammed's words when he said in his last speech at Mecca: "*Your lives and your property are sacred and inviolable.*

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While my master discussed the political situation with his brother, I heard many more things which astonished me. I learnt that the Assembly after having laid down the principles which I had read just now, proposed to abolish all such institutions as offended the liberty and equality of the rights of man. "Nobility, peerage, hereditary distinctions. Distinctions of orders, feudal regime, patrimonial justice, titles, denominatives or prerogatives thence derived. Orders of knighthood, corporation, which required proof of nobility or pre-supposed distinctions of birth, were all swept away. Such distinctions alone remained as belonged to public functionaries in discharge of their duties. Hereditary succession in office was also abolished. All Frenchmen in all parts of the country should

have equal rights. No Guilds or corporations should remain, nor would the law recognise religious vows or other engagements which might militate against either natural rights or the constitution. There was to be 'Equality of all men'. Abolishing of feudal privilege, inclusion of the Monarchy under the control of the sovereign people."

The king refused to become a constitutional monarch. He was in the habit of saying: "I am the state," and this was henceforth to be: "We are the state." I heard that he sent away his good advisers and he summoned German and Swiss troops to keep the people in order. There was a rumour that the commander of the *Bastille* (Prison) had orders to fire on the people. This enraged the crowds. They rushed through the streets pillaging the backer-shops and wine-shops, shouting: "Down with the Bastille!" They pulled down the strong prison-walls because they identified the prison with the king's despotism. Not only that, but they went to attack castles and monastries and burnt up all the deeds and bonds by which their Lords had kept them enslaved.

It seemed my master thought that this sort of thing could not take a good end and he said to Jaqueline: "Let us fly; the mobs have gone mad, and will cut us to pieces ere long." But she laughed and said all these revolting people should be shot down for insulting the 'divine right' of their king. She thought she was very safe in the strong palace under the protection of the king and Queen, the nobles, the priests and the Swiss guards. The Queen had made

her a Lady-in-waiting. She wore beautiful rich robes and her lovely hair was arranged in Greek style with pearl-bands, a coiffeur which was coming into fashion now, for the old way of dressing the hair had been dropped, because it was too toilsome and unclean. These former coiffeurs had reached tremendous heights and were adorned with ribbons, flowers, plumes butterflies and all sorts of phantastic decorations. They were pomaded and plastered and were opened up only once after eight or nine weeks teeming with vermin.

I heard that the national guard that had been formed by the citizens to keep order in Paris was commanded by the high-minded *Lafayette* who was not at all liked by the Queen as she thought he was siding the people, while the people suspected him to be with Royalty. This national guard had adopted a badge of liberty of red, white and blue, called the tricolour cockade, which stood for the Republic and constitution. I heard that many people in order to go unmolested, wore the tricolour badge shouting with the people: "Vive la Republic." (Long live the Republic!)

After the fall of the Bastille, the king had agreed to remove his foreign troops from Paris and Versailles. He appeared with the tricolour cockade on his breast and I heard that the people greeted him with enthusiasm. From this I gathered that they loved their king and did not wish to get rid of him. He seemed willing now to become a constitutional monarch. But his court and his Queen were his undoing. Marie

Antoinette was secretly negotiating with her German relations, asking them to invade France and to rescue them.

The court had gone to dwell in the magnificent historical palace of Versailles. I heard that the Assembly was there too discussing more plans of reform. It decided to abolish the feudal provinces with their despotic laws. The property of the church was taken away. All titles disappeared and the king could no longer make laws or levy taxes.

Jaqueline was revelling in the grandeur that surrounded her. She worshipped the Queen and it looked as if she had forgotten her Georges, my master completely. Nevertheless, sometimes when he reproached her, she repented her frivolities, and then they met at night in the beautiful ground of the palace near the *Tapis Vert* where the white marble group of *Latona* with *Apollo* and *Diana* shimmered like silver in the moon light. Here she nestled to his breast and wept with remorse and they renewed their vows. But all this did not last long. The flatteries of the courtiers and the gracious smiles of the Queen turned her head. I wondered not at her admiration for Marie Antoinette. She was indeed very beautiful. She had the disposition of a winning child; sweet, gay and innocent. She was artistic and emotional, yet proud and self-willed as children are, whimsical and intriguing. She seemed like a princess in a golden castle of the Arabian Nights, surrounded by luxury and radiance, poetry, music, dance, love

and chivalry. Everyone serving her and doing her biddings. The king being her knight who generously would have laid down his life for her. Isolated in their golden castle they were all in all to each other, not caring for the misery that prevailed outside. It seemed to me that all the traits inherent in the Arab-race were expressed in this Royal court not only, but were ever to be found among aristocrats, that lived in luxury and splendour. While the middle classes had absorbed the real message of Islam of which the equality of men, brotherhood and justice were the ruling principles, as I had seen in Cromwellian times and which formed the very basis and war cry of the French Revolution. Only once in history I had seen the rich luxurious life with its Arab-traits of poetry, music, dance, love and chivalry merge into union with the teachings of Islam in a glorious synthesis, which had produced the grand civilization and culture of Abd-ur-Rahman's paradise in Spain, which were still the beacon-lights of the world.

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I noticed that my master was sad and depressed because of Jaqueline's light-hearted ways. Perhaps he thought the girl dreamed of marrying one of the noblemen. But I could not bring myself to believe this. I fancied she flirted only to tease my master, because I saw that whenever he tried to leave her alone and refrained from showing his jealousy to her, she approached him with much affection and assured him that whatever she did, could never interfere with her love for him.

One day I heard that a banquet was being given to the soldiers at Versailles. My master said that the markets of Paris were being emptied to carry cart-loads of food to Versailles and that the people were infuriated. I feared that they would make their way to the palace. This actually happened. The mobs marched eleven miles from Paris to Versailles, and I heard that poor Lafayette, who was in command of the National Guard, could not succeed to check the crowds. All he could do was to march with them in order to prevent them from bursting into the palace. They went first to the Assembly, howling and abusing. After that the wild hordes rushed to the palace.

Here the feast was in full swing. Here wine was flowing and food was plentiful. Dancing ladies wore white cockades, singing royalist songs. My master saw the crowds advancing. He tried to contact Jaqueline, but she was intoxicated with mirth and wine, flirting with the nobles, joining the royalist songs.

The sight of the abundance and waste of food, drove the hungry people to despair. They jeered, hooted and shouted, trying to force the palace-gates. Just then the king returned from his hunting party. He talked to the mobs and succeeded to calm them. But they insisted that the Royal family should go back to Paris with them. They shouted for bread, and I saw that fifty cart-loads of the king's grain were going with them. I am sure I had never seen such a remarkable procession before. Thousands of

rough, low peasants, ill-clad, ill-fed, accompanying the royal coaches with yelling, singing and beating of drums: "We shall have enough bread now, for we have with us the baker and baker's wife and boy!" so they shouted. They went all the way with the royal family to the palace of the Tuileries where they saw them safely through the palace-gates. I could not help thinking that this was a great triumph for the revolution. Later on my master heard from his brother that 100 members of the Assembly had returned to Paris as well.

Jaqueline was scared and dejected. The wild mobs had frightened her. She never had imagined that the vulgar crowds were so powerful. She gave a sweet and anxious smile to my master when she saw him. She seemed disillusioned. My master told her that lots of nobles had emigrated and that now another emigration had started. These Emigrants were running away to the eastern frontier to be near the Germans and induce them to declare war on France to save the king. Again my master pressed the girl to go away with him; but she still hesitated. She said the Queen firmly believed help would come soon.

I heard that Mirabeau had died of over-work. The king had been shocked because now his support and best guide had gone. Soon I came to know that the royal family planned to escape to the eastern frontier. Then one night a coach left stealthily, carrying the king, the trembling Queen and their children. Jaqueline wept when she found that she and the

whole court had been left behind. My master impressed upon her the necessity of flight now. He said his brother had secured for him some old torn clothes for that purpose. I noticed that he had not trimmed me, his beard, for several days and I could grow in freedom. I knew I would look soon unkempt and wild like the beards of the members of the mobs. I really did not see why the cry for freedom should not be uttered as well by all the beards of France! Jaqueline agreed to leave the palace and let herself escort by my master to the village where her mother lived. But before the couple could start, the royal family had come back. I heard they had been recognized near *Verdun* and had been ordered to return to Paris. I supposed that the people were convinced now that the king had wanted to reach the Emigrants at the frontier and make war on France with the help of the Germans. Jaqueline was delighted at the return of her Queen; but Marie Antoinette had changed. She took no notice of her, she was often pensive and sorrowful and refrained from reverting to her frivolous playful moods.

At this time I heard that the Assembly had finished its work and the constitution had been laid before the king. He accepted it at once, and I heard that "he went to the Assembly and swore that he would observe it faithfully." I noticed that he went on the 14th September 1791. The country was jubilant. All troubles seemed over now, for the king had sworn to be a constitutional Monarch, and there was peace for a time.

Soon I came to know that the excluded Royalists looked for succour and that Leopold of Austria and Frederick William of Prussia became active, demanding the freedom of king Louis XVI, the return of the Emigrants and the dissolution of the Assembly with the removal of the constitution. This was a challenge to the revolutionists, a great threat to the Assembly, but a sweet balm for the king and his Queen. I heard that most of the officers had fled to the Emigrants eager "to show to the Germans the way to Paris."

The Assembly had taken measures against the Clergy who had failed to take the oath and had stirred up trouble. The Assembly had declared "that refractory priests should lose their pay and should not be allowed to perform service." The Assembly demanded also that the king should dismiss his Swiss Guard, but he refused to do so. The worst was that a club called the *Jacobin Club* had risen as a rival element of the Assembly. The members of this club were anti-constitutional and thoroughly revolutionist. Many ministers of the king resigned and a dreadful confusion reigned all round. The muddle the country was in, was enough to frighten any one, and one day the brother of my master brought news that the king "had sent a secret mission to Vienna to pray the Germans to rescue him from the tyranny of those who ruled with a rod of iron." I thought this was the worst thing the king could have done, for now all the nations had risen against France and the revolution, to save the king.

I learnt that Lafayette, truthful as he was, tried to defy the Jacobins. This was his undoing and he lost popularity because the people believed that he belonged to the aristocratic Emigrants. The Jacobins in reply raised the people against him and the Assembly, and now the mobs rushed again to the palace suspecting treason. My master saw the king put on the red cap of liberty, and the Queen placed another red cap upon the head of the little prince Royal. At once the populace became appeased and departed quietly. I could see that the people even now did not wish to lose their king.

Prussia had declared war against France and was on the march. This shifted all the power to the Jacobins. I heard that the country now demanded the abdication of the king. France was being attacked by foreigners, led by the Emigrants! Now the Jacobins tried to force the hands of the Assembly. They meant to sweep away the constitution in favour of the revolution. I heard that the cry: "France is in danger!" made Frenchmen enrol by thousands. The Assembly and the Monarchy were suspected of having brought about the foreign invasion. 50,000 volunteers were raised, but it was said that "the van-guard of the attack on the constitution was entrusted to the battalion of men of *Marseilles*." It was known that these were men who delighted in laying down their lives for their country. I learnt that they were singing an inspiring song, called the *Marseillaise*. They were on the march for over a month with hardly anything to eat. Without rest they

marched, not even pausing to drink water in the hot summer-weather. Their uniforms were dusty and torn. They carried the heavy banner with the words: "The Rights of Man." Some were almost in rags, having no shoes and only a vestige of breeches. Frantic with desire to win freedom and put matters right, they marched on, often exhausted to death, singing with hoarse voices the Marseillaise: "Allon, enfants de la Patrie!" (Come, children of our country!) The people joined them as they moved along, shouting: "Aux armes citoyens!" (To arms citizens!)

I found that when the royal family heard that the van-guard was heading for the palace, they took refuge in the Assembly. My master who had secured the old clothes, ran to Jaqueline, who, knowing the danger, divested herself of all her fineries and crept into the torn and soiled dress of a peasant woman. The red gold of her hair vanished beneath a coarse scarf. She wore a patched blouse, a skirt, torn at places, and a dirty apron. My master doffed his smart livery, threw away his pig-tailed wig and put on things typical of the rough mob. I, his unkempt beard, added to make him look a proper roughian. The lovers succeeded to escape before the savage van-guard arrived. They mixed with the crowds that had gathered round the palace. Wearing red badges, they shouted in unison with the revolutionists. The sight of the wild, starved mobs, and the palace of the 'tyrants' seemed to give new strength to the exhausted men from Marseilles. With terrifying fury they attacked the faithful Swiss Guards, who easily could

have fled before their arrival, but who defended the palace with unheard-of heroism and were literally cut to pieces by the infuriated soldiers. The palace was taken and sacked. I heard that the Assembly was crushed, and the king and Queen with their children were imprisoned in the *Temple.*

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My master had been advised by his brother not to take Jaqueline home to her village at once, as the country roads were unsafe and travellers of whatever description were often stopped by soldiers, suspected of espionage. He took the couple to his humble rooms in town. He had taken a waiter's job in a small coffee-house on one of the *Boulevards.* When he brought in his meagre earnings, he brought the news as well. I heard that the king had been executed on the 20th of January 1793. The Queen remained imprisoned for quite a long time yet; but in the end she too was executed. The report said that her fortitude and dignity were remarkable and that she died like a Queen. Hearing all this, Jaqueline wept bitter tears. She remembered her religion; she crossed herself and prayed to the Virgin Mary to bless the soul of the poor Queen who had been so kind to her.

I could not help pitying the king and the Queen. I wondered why, inspite of their weaknesses, kings should be treated with such inhuman brutality. I remembered the words of Christ: "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." But it seemed to me that this

sentence was not complete. It was only a 'hint'. Indeed, I thought, render to the king what is the king's; but only if he is wise and noble. If he loves the people and works for their good. If he merges his power into theirs, and they can merge their power into his. Then he will be as though he had been chosen by them, and while he serves them they serve him. I decided that it is not the king, the Caliph, the President, the Leader, or whatever the head may be called; but it is the quality that counts. It is not the object but the quality of the object that is either prisonous or wholesome. Food that has gone bad will be discarded; but good food will be used. Selfless 'Omar' would not eat butter because he heard that the people had no butter. If a king is like him, he is the greatest ornament of a people. It was not the King that England and France wanted to abolish. It was the principle of corruption they desired to uproot. Otherwise, to have a leader, a king, a queen is the very institution of nature which cannot progress at all without a leader, that is, without the 'Guiding Principle'.

I remembered the other sayings of Christ. Those of the 'Sermon on the Mount', the most beautiful and divine that ever thrilled me to the core. How could the world, that is mostly composed of rough elements, understand such sublime counsel? It could only trample upon it as it has actually done by crucifying him. Not by the counsel of infinite compassion, forgiveness and mercy can this vulgar world advance; but by marching in step with the drum-beat

Justice" alone can it progress. Then I remembered that the Prophet Mohammed counselled forgiveness in every instance, saying: "Help yourself to mend your injury. Forgive and forget the harm done to you. If you cannot forgive, then sit in Judgement, but see that you do not inflict a jota more than what you have suffered, otherwise you will become the guilty one." I had to admit that the Prophet's counsel was ever a synthetic one. This idea reminded me of Shakespeare's "*Merchant of Venice*" where *Portia* argues with the Jew *Shylock* to be exact in his weight of the "pound of flesh" and not to spill even one drop of blood.

I heard that a reign of terror had started now, and I saw that the Hydra of Cruelty had assumed dimensions as I had never seen before. The Hydra's million heads had their mouths open perpetually, thirsting for blood. The news, that a machine to kill people had been erected in a square of the town, terrified Jaqueline. She insisted on going away, saying she would be safer in her village with her mother. But my master and his brother would not hear of it. Every man and woman were suspected of treason. A glance, a hint, a word, a gesture, a smile and off you go to the *Guillotine* which had been invented by Dr. *Antoin Louis* and was at first called, *Louisette*, but afterwards received the name 'Guillotine', who was a French physician and who had proposed that it should be used for beheading criminals.

One night my master was awakened by the noise of a door being opened and closed. He sat up

and listened without waking his brother; I knew that it had been the door of Jaqueline's room next to my master's. As all remained quiet, no more attention was paid to it. Next morning it was discovered that Jaqueline was missing. The foolish girl had run away in the night. Both brothers went in search of her, but there was no trace of her anywhere.

The worst was that very little money was available. My master and Jaqueline had left behind all their possessions when they had escaped from the palace, while my master's brother's money-box had been robbed on the day when the Assembly had been attacked. Nevertheless, my master made ready to leave for Jaqueline's home. He would walk. But his brother did not let him go, as the village was too far. He entreated him not to expose himself to the attacks of the mad mobs that were scattered all over the woods and country roads, ready to kill anyone who appeared to be unfamiliar with their vulgar ways. He said Jaqueline must have lost her life on the way to her village. In the end my master believed that she had perished by some roughian's hand, and he mourned her loss deeply.

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My master had become a dish-washer in the same coffee-house where his brother worked. It was a miserable job compared to the lofty position he had occupied at the court of Louis XVI. He kept on mourning for Jaqueline, and when he had earned a little money, he set out for Jaqueline's home, not

heeding his brother's warnings. He was going to make certain whether she was really dead or not. He had to walk as he could neither afford coach or horse. Hardly had he reached the open country and night had set in, when he was attacked by some vagabonds. He was searched, deprived of his few coins and beaten severely. Bruised and unhappy he crept back to Paris. Seeing his condition, his brother received him with kindness and tended him until he had recovered.

Once my master went to the square where the Guillotine had been erected. It was called the *Place de la Revolution* and all round it, as in an amphitheatre, sat the mobs watching the show throughout the day. Women had brought their knittings and men their lunch, enjoying it while the carts came one after another bringing the victims that were condemned to die. The mobs hooted and jeered when the carts arrived and wildly clapped with bestial delight when the heads rolled to the ground with streams of blood. Not even in ancient Rome, when the lions devoured the Christians, had I seen such blood-curdling spectacles or had heard such wild cries for more blood. What a monster was man when run amuck! For no doubt, all sanity had departed from the diabolical crowd which I beheld here. And I heard that the killers received 6 Francs per day for chopping off the heads.

Never had I seen or heard that in any Moslem country such sights were possible. Most probably because the most despotic Moslem rulers had absorbed

somewhat of the great Islamic principle of humanism. The mobs that I saw here seemed to feel quite at home surrounded by the blood-pools of their brothers. Children played with toys and women wore brooches shaped like Guillotines. Red badges were fastened with Guillotine pins and hawkers sold Guillotine-souvenirs. It was a regular Guillotine fair. My master only once went to see these gruesome performances as he found all this inhuman cruelty upset him, so that he grew sick and could not even eat his simple meal.

I heard that the man in power was one *Marat* who craved for blood incessantly. But he was not destined to satisfy for long his lust of blood as oné girl named *Charlotte Corday* went to his house and stabbed him.

After him came *Robespierre* who was indeed Satan incarnate as he killed everything in his way, high and low, aristocrats or simple men and women; old and young folks most of them innocent, till the Guillotine was killing 50 people every day. I heard that in other towns Guillotines were erected as well and there too mother Earth was forced to drink rivers of blood of her own children till the number of victims had almost risen up to 20,000. The frantic fury of Robespierre to kill received a check only when his own supporters were disgusted with his methods and he himself was led to the Guillotine to perish there. After his death the reign of terror came to an end and the power passed into the hands of a group of people called "the Directory," whose duty it was to carry out the new constitution.

But more trouble was in store. The Royalists tried to re-establish the Monarchy and staged an insurrection. Street fighting was going on and more blood was shed. The Directory entrusted the command of the republican soldiers to a young artillery officer whose name was *Napoleon Bonaparte.* It was known that he had won laurels in defending *Toulon* near Marseilles, and was now in Paris. He quelled the insurrection and restored order. He was destined to become the greatest power in Europe for many years to come.

I heard that he was born in *Corsica,* an Island that had been ceded by the *Genoese* to France in the year 1768, and that he spoke French with an Italian accent. He had defended Italy against the Austrians. Later, he went to Egypt to fight the *Mamelukes,* but *Nelson,* the British Admiral destroyed his fleet in the battle of the Nile and he had to return to France in a single ship. Afterwards I heard that he changed the form of the Government in France and became the "first Consul."

After his many wars and victories, now for the first time he devoted himself to giving peace to the world, and I heard the saying: "No war or battle-sound was heard the world around." The people rejoiced, and they loved their chief devotedly, for he started many good works. Roads and bridges were made, trade was encouraged and education was improved. French families that had fled during the revolution were allowed to return now, and services were again

held in the churches. But, "the traditional life of the church was rudely cut off. The authority of the state was displayed in full." I heard that it was "a humble church at the beck-and-call of Napoleon."

I noticed that France became prosperous and productive. "Bonaparte's splendid gift of organization continued to work wonders. He made the income of the country meet all the outgoings and created a real surplus, a thing unknown throughout the previous century. On every side fresh energy was evoked; new enterprise stimulated; all things were felt to proceed from one centre, a centre not, as in the old Monarchy, of selfishness and waste, but of active and beneficient influence."

I heard that Napoleon's greatest work of this period, was the construction of the civil code, on which he himself worked with amazing clearness and ability. I learnt that all countries had made peace with France. Napoleon was able to impose his will on the whole of Europe. Not so on England ! She alone stood out against this great conqueror, proudly and invincible.

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Some years had passed and only now, during the time of peace and prosperity, my master and his brother had been able to climb out of their extreme poverty, and discard their mean jobs. My master's brother was employed as a clerk in some government office. His salary was good and he helped my master as much as he could. I was glad to see that having

saved up some money, my master bought a smart waiter's outfit and soon after he secured a job in a well-known Restaurant on one of the fashionable *Boulevards*. But I was not so glad to see that the barber appeared with the shaving knife! I was sure my turn of the Guillotine had come! I was being shaved off completely, and I thought the cause of this was that bearded waiters were not tolerated in fashionable establishments.

Once again I was imprisoned beneath the skin and could hear and see nothing. Only muffled echoes of laughter of men and women and the clatter of plates reached my ears. This went on for a very long time. But one morning I felt something like an earth-quake. My master was thrown to all sides; the world seemed to go round and round and all was up-side-down. I heard many muffled voices; I had a waving sensation as if my master was being carried; then there was a strange silence. No one shaved me during the following days and I had an occasion to grow. I made haste to set out of my prison to see what had happened.

When I could survey my surroundings, I noticed that my master was lying in bed. A physician sat at his side examining a bandage on his arm. From their talk I gathered that my master had fallen down the stairs of the Restaurant and had broken his arm. He had also bruised his head severely and had fainted at the time of the accident. No one thought of shaving me and I confessed that through some one's fall I had risen to liberty.

One day the proprietor of the Restaurant appeared, to see how my master was. I heard that he was very satisfied with my master's way of service which was refined and pleasing. His knowledge of German and English was very helpful. He had become a favourite of the customers. Owing to his popularity, the proprietor had made him the head-waiter raising his salary, and just then the accident had happened.

It took quite a long time before my master's arm was whole again, and then I found that he had no mind to have his beard removed. The barber only trimmed me, and I became a very elegant small beard. The proprietor approved of it, and remarked that it was better for a head-waiter to have a small beard as it looked more respectable.

Soon my master took up his new position, and after a few months he decided once again to go in search of Jaqueline to ascertain whether she was alive or dead. I became aware that he was determined to go in better style this time. He purchased some elegant clothes, and having been granted a few days leave, he boarded a coach with a small suitcase. He had started in the morning and reached the village at sunset. He alighted and made his way to a cottage outside the village, the name of which was *Chaumiere Rose* (Rose Cottage). He had come here many years ago with Jaqueline on holidays, spending a day or two with her mother and her brother, a small farmer whose land lay behind the cottage. Everything

seemed the same as I had seen it years ago. My master rang the old fashioned bell, and a woman of about 49 years of age opened the door. I saw that she was Jaqueline's mother. She recognized my master at once and she cried joyfully: "Monsieur Georges! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Quel plaisir!" She was altogether overwhelmed. She took him to the kitchen where her son had his simple supper. Recognizing my master, he shook hands with him and was immensely pleased to see him. I noticed that he was as sturdy and strong as he had been before, though he looked a little older and there seemed sorrow in his eyes. I calculated that he must be about 31 years now and his sister must have reached the age of 26 as she was five years younger than him. In 1794 she had been 18, and now we had the year 1802.

Jaqueline's mother brought milk, bread, cheese and sweet cakes and my master joined their humble evening meal, during which he was told what had happened since they had not seen each other. First I heard all about Jaqueline. She had been picked up on the night of her flight by the village butcher who with his cart had returned from Paris soon after midnight. She had fallen on the road almost fainting, crying for help. By the dim flicker of his cart-lamp, the butcher had recognized her, and being the friend of her brother had lifted her into his cart and had brought her safely to the village. I heard that, before this, the soldiers marching from Marseilles had just missed the village because it was situated off the main road.

But stray mobs had plundered the village several times; had looted the small shops, had attacked 'Chaumiere Rose' and the land, and had taken away livestock and grain. All they could do was to join the crowds and shout revolutionist slogans. I heard that Jaqueline had become very weak and frail, that she was always praying, and at present was in the sitting room reading the Bible. After the meal my master was taken to the sitting room, and seeing him, the girl staggered up from her chair: "Georges! Georges!" she cried tremblingly and throwing her arms round his neck she wept for very joy. My master held her close to him and I could hear his heart beat loudly with happiness of having found her alive.

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When my master's brother heard what had happened, he smiled gladly, thanking God that the girl had not come to grief.

Soon after this, a very distinguished-looking gentleman accompanied by a stoutish lady, visited the Restaurant. My master received them with his wonted refined bows, and with polite phrases of welcome led them to a table for two. He placed before them the menu and the wine-card and asked his underlings to attend on the new arrivals. They ordered a sumptuous dinner and champagne. The gentleman was slightly lame and walked with the aid of a stick and the lady had an Italian look. Both seemed of the same age round about 50. The gentleman had placed a parcel upon the table, which he now opened and I saw that it contained two medium-sized books.

When he had finished dinner and had paid the bill which was brought to them by my master, the gentleman opened one of the books and holding it up to my master said: "Can you read this?" "Qui Monsieur", replied my master: "It is German." Then the other book was opened and I heard the same question: "Can you read this?" "Qui Monsieur, it is English," answered my master, and the gentleman seemed very pleased. "I need someone like you", he said. "The man who used to read to me died; my niece speaks only French; my wife......here he nodded to the lady at his side......speaks only Italian and a little French. I myself know many languages, but my eyes are very bad, and since it is my habit to read most literary works in their originals, for getting at their proper spirit, I need someone who can perform this duty for me. I have come all the way from Versailles to purchase these new publications, and if you have good eyes and are interested in the matter, you may call on me as soon as it is possible for you." With these words he put his visiting card on the table and rose. "Merci bien Monsieur" said my master with a most elegant bow, assuring him that it was a great honour to serve him. He helped him into his coat, bowed the couple out of the Restaurant and saw them to their carriage. He had received a very substantial tip, and when he looked at the card the gentleman had left, he read: "*Vicomte de la Matain, Villa Clementia, Versailles.*" I supposed that the stranger must be one of the families that had been allowed by Napoleon to return from exile.

As soon as my master obtained some leave, he went and called on the Viscount. Villa Clementia was a beautiful house standing in its own large grounds which contained another very pretty cottage beside the main building. The Viscount saw him at once. He was led by a footman to a spacious drawing room with gilded furniture; rich brocade curtains and oil-pictures by famous masters. The Viscount's wife who was present sat in an easy chair with some embroidery and a young girl, most probably the Viscount's niece or daughter, was busy filling the fine oriental vases with flowers. My master was offered a salary at least three times the size as his present one; food, and a bright airy room to live in, and all he had to do was to read to the Viscount for a few hours every day. I was happy when I heard that my master accepted the job at once. I knew that this place was much closer to Jaqueline's home which thought was a great advantage.

It was not difficult for my master to dis-engage himself from his occupation in the Restaurant, as he told the proprietor that he was going to marry and to live in a house of his own at Versailles, and the proprietor could not very well protest against this and had to release him. What my master said was quite true, as I knew he would now marry Jaqueline and as soon as it was possible for him would purchase a house at Versailles, since that place held very sweet memories for him. He packed up at once, while his brother congratulated him saying 'fortuna' had fallen in love with him.

My master did not leave the coach at Versailles but he went on to Jaqueline's home. There he broached the subject of marriage to her mother and brother as now he was able to support a wife. He suggested that she could live for the time-being with them until he had saved up enough money to purchase a house.

I was surprised to see that mother and brother were shocked at the idea of marriage. They said Jaqueline was not strong enough to marry and bear children, and that the doctor would not give his consent for it either. I found that Jaqueline herself did not think of marriage. She was indeed very weak. Her rich golden hair had paled. She often wept, blaming herself for sins she had not committed. She was always praying; always going to church. She was often seen in company of the Parish priest and I heard that the villagers had begun to call her *Saint Jaqueline.*

I could easily imagine the disappointment of my master. He repaired to Villa Clementia with a gloomy face. For a long time he sat in the beautiful room that had been allotted to him, thinking and thinking. Suddenly I heard sweet music. Downstairs someone played upon an instrument called *harpsichord.* I wondered who the player could be. My master looked up and listened. The music seemed to dispel his dismal mood. He got up and softly hummed the tune which he knew. Then he murmured: "I will wait; I will make her strong with my love; she shall be mine, no matter when."

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Since there was no marriage things remained as they were. My master waited for Jaqueline to get stronger. He visited her very often and passed very many happy hours with her. I could see that she was very fond of him, as when he did not appear at the appointed time and was late, her mother said, she grew anxious and asked for him.

As time passed, I heard that Napoleon had changed the form of Government again and had made himself Emperor on the 18th of March 1804. He had made the Pope go to Paris and crown him, as well as his wife with a golden Laurel-wreath. But there were rumours that Napoleon had taken the crown from the Pope's hand and had put it on his head himself. He was called now **Napoleon I**, and was to be addressed "*Sire*" and "*Majesty*".

I heard that his wife Josephine had been a widow with two grown-up children. She used to be prominent in Parisian Society. He married her in 1796 when he was more or less a lonely stranger in Paris and the union gave him many social advantages. Josephine was a lady of very sweet disposition and excellent taste in dress. She was greatly attached to him and it was said that Napoleon loved her very much. But then, he was an ambitious man and nothing must stand in the way of the achievements of his ambitious aims. When he had become Emperor, his brother advised him to divorce Josephine and marry in higher quarters; also because Josephine had not given him a son. But I heard, that he had made

up his mind to adopt the son of Josephine's daughter Horfensa and to make him the successor of the throne.

When the Viscount heard that Napoleon had not only accepted the crown, but had taken it from the Pope's hand and put it himself upon his head, he laughed and declared that Napoleon had acted like a man and had not behaved like the English Cromwell whom he called a timid man, not strong enough to bear the weight of a crown. I saw that the Viscount was in favour of Royalty since he was himself an aristocrat. My master agreed with his idea; but I shook my head at the false judgement of the two men who called ambition and selfishness virtues. In my mind I compared Napoleon with Cromwell, and found that as far as strength of character, moral principles, nobility of soul and selflessness were concerned, Napoleon was not worthy of binding the shoe-latchets of Cromwell, who had been the prototype of the great *Omar* in every way. Whose ideal it had been not to enslave but free the world from slavery. The cry of Liberty had been uttered by him; while Napoleon reluctantly had bowed to that cry which had not been uttered by him but by the people. Apart from the period of peace and his constructive work in that period he seemed to have worked against the principle of liberty; and I heard some historians say that he had to be cautious not to alarm the Republicans by emerging suddenly as a full-fledged Emperor, and he had to show to the people his earnest intentions to serve the Republic and to do such works by which

he would deserve to become Emperor. Such historians assert that he used his great gift of organization to lull the Republicans to sleep by his zealous labour for their good, and that all this was part of his design to become Emperor. Humble beard that I was, I could not bring myself to agree with such views altogether. I thought Napoleon was rather a mixture of boundless ambition and honest purpose, and that these two natures asserted themselves alternately. At one time he desired to show himself on the stage of the world to display the manifold glorious colours of power, similar to a peacock, and at another time he was ready to renounce, withdraw, give up everything. He had in himself much humanism and generosity, but this could not be different, for these were not Pagan times or times of Constantinian Christianity. These were post-Islamic times when Islamic-Protestantism had been assimilated by the world to a great extent, and when a ruler like Alexander the Great had become an impossibility. Napoleon after all was a product of post-Islamic times when everything, even Catholicism had been Islamized. He was, no doubt, a great materialistic and could not be compared with the greatness of Cromwell, who was not only a military genius, but a great moral Reformer who in all his undertakings relied upon God, while Napoleon had nothing else to rely upon but himself and his army. Although he was the perfect Hero of his army who idolized him, I had different ideas of a perfect Hero. For me the perfect Hero was the Caliph Omar, who when walking outside the town and

meeting the messenger that brought the news of the result of the battle between a handful of Arabs and the mighty Persian Empire, did not reveal his identity to the messenger who was on camel-back, but ran at the side of the camel to receive the news without a moment's delay. And when they came to town and the people saw the great Caliph running and panting at the side of the camel-man who had no idea that it was the Caliph, they were horrified, howling at the messenger, ready to tear him from his camel. But Omar checked them, saying that it did not matter who was riding and who was running, as the only thing of importance had been to get the news of the battle without a moment's delay, for it decided the fate of Islam, decided whether Islam was to live or perish at the hands of the hostile Persian hordes. And because such greatness as Omar's existed, Islam was saved, not only saved for 11 years like Napoleon's Empire; not only saved for centuries to come; but saved for all times.

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Soon after Napoleon had become Emperor, the wars started again. He had now boundless means at his disposal. The principle of the Revolution was forgotten and Monarchy was encouraged. After the sea-battle of Trafalgar on the 21st October 1805 when the French fleet had been destroyed by the great English Naval Commander Nelson, Napoleon fought the Russians and Austrians together, in a war which was said to have been forced upon him. He defeated them at Austerlitz, on the 2nd December 1805, and

I heard that then the English Minister Pitt had said: "Roll up that map of Europe. There will be no need for it for ten years to come." By this he meant that wars would go on in Europe for another ten years. I heard that after this brilliant victory Napoleon crushed the Germans on October 14th, 1806, in the battle of Jena. I came to know that at that time the great poet Goethe lived in the town of Weimar at the court of the Grand Duke Karl August, who was the companion of his youth, his pupil, his benefactor and his best friend during all his life. At the same time I heard of the great poet *Schiller*. It was said that the friendship of these two poets had no parallel in literary history. They loved each other like twin-brothers and inspired and helped each other in their work. Schiller was many years younger than Goethe, but he died about 26 years earlier than his friend who sobbed bitterly hearing of his death, which occurred just before the French invasion. I thought it was better for this pure-hearted idealistic poet to have passed away while his beloved native-land was yet at peace, for the conquering French troops plundered Weimar and the people lost all their possessions. The court of Weimar had fled in time, but after peace had been concluded, it returned. Later on I heard that Goethe was invited to an audience by the Emperor which took place at the congress of Erfurt where all the sovereigns and princes of Europe had assembled. Napoleon sat at his breakfast table and beckoned Goethe to approach. Then he said to him: "Vous etes un homme!" (You are a man!) He asked

him how old he was, wondered at his fresh complexion, and told him that he had read his "Sorrows of Weather" seven times. They conversed for quite a while and Napoleon invited Goethe to Paris. I learnt that they parted with mutual admiration.

The Viscount displayed keen interest in Goethe and Schiller. My master had to read to him Schiller's "Ideals" and he nodded and said: "Quite right, all things we consider great and beautiful vanish one by one, only 'Friendship' remains." When he read to him Schiller's *Joan of Arc*, he nodded again and said: "Quite right, I do agree with Schiller. Shakespeare's Judgement is too harsh and seems incorrect." One day my master read to him one of Goethe's poems called: "Mohammed's Song". At the same time I heard that Goethe had planned to write a drama called: "Mohammed", and that for this purpose he had read the Koran through and through. The Viscount, although a staunch catholic, liked the poem so much that now and again he demanded to hear it, till I knew it almost by heart, and I repeated it to myself very often as it was very beautiful. Only inspiration could have produced it. In the poem Goethe compares Mohammed with a stream, and this is what I remembered of it:

Song of Mohammed

"See the rock-born stream, like a star so bright,
Kindly spirits high above the clouds
Nourished him while youthful in the copse
between the cliffs.

Young and fresh from the clouds he danceth
Down upon the marble-rocks.
Through the mountain-passes chaseth he the colour'd pebbles,
And advancing like a Chief, tears his brother streamlets with him.
In his course, in the valley down below 'neath his footsteps spring the flowers,
And the meadow in his breath finds life.
Yet, no shady vale can stay him,
Nor can flowers round his knees all softly twining
With their loving eyes detain him.
To the plain his course he taketh,
Social streamlets join his waters, and now moves he
O'er the plain in silvery glory,
And the plain in him exults.
And the rivers from the plain, and the streamlets from the mountain
Shout with joy exclaiming: "Brother!
Brother! take with thee thy brethren
With thee to thine aged father
To the everlasting ocean,
Who with arms outstretching far, waiteth for us!
Ah, in vain His arms lie open to embrace His yearning children,
For the thirsty sand consumes us in the desert waste!"
........Let all come then! ....
And now swells he lordlier still; yea, even a people
Bears his royal flood on high!
And in triumph on-ward sailing,

Names to countries gives he, cities spring to
life beneath his foot.
........And so beareth he his brethren
All his treasures, all his children
Wildly shouting, to the bosom
Of his long-expectant Sire."

Whenever I repeated this poem to myself, I was not able to keep to its original metre, but I crowded it so that it sounded more like prose, and I often left out many lines. Anyway, I thought that only a Moslem could have been inspired to write such a poem. I came to know that when Goethe heard that 'Islam' means *Submission to the law*, he said: "Do we not all live in Islam then." He, as well as the English writer *Carlyle* were great admirers of the Prophet Mohammed. There was another small poem of Goethe which the Viscount was particularly fond of, it said:

"The remembrance of the good,
Keeps us ever glad in mood,
The remembrance of the fair
Makes a mortal rapture share;
The remembrance of the *One*
Is the greatest joy that's known."

By the 'One' God is meant, and this gives evidence of Goethe's faith in the Islamic Unity of God.

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The Viscount suffered from gout, which the doctor said was due to the drinking of too much champagne. His wife often entreated him to drop

that habit, but his will was not strong enough to do so. I realized that it must be difficult to give up a thing which by pleasing the senses made the world look a paradise, at least momentary. I thanked my stars that we beards could not bear the smell of wine, beer, brandy or liqueur, and was glad that my master never touched any intoxicating drinks.

My master had been engaged as a 'Reader'. Therefore from the very beginning he had worn, no uniform, but Gentleman's attire, and he was always well-dressed. One day the Viscount requested him to tell him something of his family. Then I heard that my master's father had been a French Nobleman who had married a German lady. She bore him two sons. My master and his brother. But when the boys were about eleven years old their parents committed suicide having lost all their wealth and property through foolish speculations. Their relatives were not well-disposed towards them and would not help, so they made a death-pact and left the world. The boys were brought up by their aunt, the English wife of a brother of my master's father. She gave them a good education. When she died they were just old enough to fend for themselves and their uncle helped them to secure humble situations.

After having heard all this, the Viscount treated my master as his equal and he was to join the family at meals, games, outings and all other functions. He began to feel very homely. Everyone was very kind to him. Julie, the niece of the Viscount, often cheered

the evenings with her play on the Harpsichord. She knew how to sing, and I noticed that she was very pretty.

On the day when Italian literature was being read to the Viscount by his wife, my master went to see Jaqueline. I saw that her brother had married. He had wedded the daughter of the village butcher, a healthy, strong girl with a kind heart and a lot of commonsense. I heard that she was a great help to Jaqueline and her mother. But I did not see any improvement in Jaqueline's health. I thought she was getting weaker instead of stronger. One day my master decided to take her to Varseilles and let her memory be refreshed by the sight of the Palace where they both had spent so many happy days. They went there in a carriage of the Viscount which was now at his disposal whenever he wished to go out. At Varseilles they sat in the vicinity of the palace on a rustic seat, and my master talked of the past days; of the King and Queen and all the splendour and happiness that had reigned here.

Jaqueline, who listened attentively, suddenly grew very excited and cried: "Ah! now I remember! How good it is that the Queen was after all saved and was not killed! How good that she was allowed to come back to the palace. She had promised to send for me; but she has not done so yet. I am sure she has forgotten; but if I were to send her a letter..." Here she broke off and burst into tears. My master was horrified. He realized that her mind had been affected by

the shocks she had sustained during the revolution of which the Queen's execution had been the worst. He knew now why she was not allowed to marry, and why she did not improve in health. But I knew that he had not looked upon her as a future wife only. He had often told his brother that he loved her like a dear soul-companion. I saw that he composed himself and then drawing her close, he consoled her, saying he would write the letter at once Then she became quite cheerful and the fit seemed over.

In the year 1807 I heard that Napoleon had become a '*King-of-Kings*'. I knew not what this meant till one evening the Viscount discussed the subject. He said "*Shahin-Shah*" was the Persian word for King-of-Kings. I heard that the Moghul Emperors of India and the Sultans of Turkey were called 'Shahin-Shah' because they were king-makers. Napoleon wanted to imitate them. I believed the dream of pomp and power of the East had gone to his head, and he began to make kings.

Soon I came to know that the brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces of Napoleon became Kings and Queens, princes and princesses of all those European countries which he had conquered. Kingdoms were allotted to all his relatives. Crowns were showered in plenty. Those generals and ministers who had served well, received thrones as well, became princes, dukes, counts, barons. It was a regular rain of crowns that descended from the Napoleonic skies, and I fancied that the ghost of the 'Divine Right' of kings was

haunting the place of its former glory, bestowing myriads of sham-crowns that shone in the night and would vanish in the morning.

Napoleon was now in a mood to divorce Josephine. I marvelled at this. How was divorce in a Catholic country possible without the wife having committed adultery? For although the Revolution had looked no longer upon marriage as a sacrament, and Josephine had been married to Napoleon by a simple contract as in Islam, I knew that in 1801 Napoleon had re-established the Church, and before Josephine could be crowned as Empress in 1804, she was re-married to Napoleon. The marriage was solemnized by the Catholic Church. Now I heard that Napoleon divorced Josephine on grounds that their marriage had not taken place in a Parish Church. But I knew that it had been solemnized in the Catholic Church in their re-marriage. By what law the divorce then had been accomplished remained a puzzle to me.

My master continued to visit Jaqueline. She was about 35 now, and her mother over 60. As time went on the girl's condition grew worse. She seemed almost transparent, and one day when my master sat with her on a bench in the garden where she read to him from the Bible, she nestled suddenly close to him and with a sigh collapsed in his arms. He held her and spoke to her soothingly, but she heard him no more. She had passed away in the midst of the glory of spring. My master was severely shocked and her mother and brother were inconsolable.

Jaqueline was buried in the pretty grounds of the village church that she had loved so much. My master felt that with her burial, the love-blossom of his youth, and the sweetest and most beautiful part of his life had been buried too.

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Some years had passed since the death of Jaqueline. My master had survived the shock; but he was always in a melancholic mood. The Viscount had come to know of the tragedy and he extended his sympathy to my master, while his niece Julie tried to cheer him with kind words and with her music, decorating his room with sweet flowers all the year round.

I heard that Napoleon was now master of all Europe. He had conquered every country excepting England. Since the battle of *Trafalgar* he knew that England ruled the seas. He tried to create a big fleet. But I laughed. I knew that the biggest fleet in the world could not defeat England. It was not her fleet that made her invincible. Nothing in the world could conquer England or America for centuries to come, or, perhaps for ever. It all depended upon how long they would honestly abide, though perhaps unconscious to themselves, by the Islamic principles. I had come to know that the ship *May Flower* in 1620 had carried 102 *Pilgrim Fathers* from England to America. They belonged to an English sect called *Separatists*, originated in Yorkshire. They were called Separatists because they had separated from the church then existing in England, same as the Puritans. They passed

a period of exile in Holland and then sailed to America. They arrived in the month of December and the terrible cold of an unknown country, together with poverty inflicted unspeakable sufferings upon them, and the first years of the little colony called: "Plymouth Colony" were a night-mare and a desperate struggle for existence. But the colony survived.

I knew that those Pilgrim Fathers had sown the seeds in America, same as Cromwell had done in England. The seeds that would bring forth the two greatest Democracies in the world, produced by Islamized Christianity in the shape of purified Protestantism, the spirit of which, these two countries, England more than America, had absorbed to a greater extent than any other country in the world. Therefore they could not be conquered. Great fleets made no difference. Great armies made no difference. It was the spirit that counted. England would have defeated Napoleon all the same at Trafalgar, or elsewhere, with a smaller fleet than his own. I had seen that a handful of Arabs had conquered Spain and the whole of the country of Sindh. A handful of Arabs had crushed the hordes of the mighty Persian Empire and a handful of "Ironsides" of Cromwell had defeated the vast army of Charles I. I knew it was the *Spirit* that counted.

But Napoleon knew nothing of all this. To bring England to submission, he created, what was called: *"The Continental System"* by which England was being blockaded. He ordered all European countries to close their ports to British ships so that no British goods

could find a market. Most of the countries obeyed. Only Portugal defied the order. Hearing this, England sent an army to Portugal to help her and the French, who occupied Portugal, were slowly driven out, by the General who later on was known as the Duke of 'Wellington'. I learnt that the Emperor Alexander of Russia, who had made an alliance with France, had suffered such great loss by the blockade, that he returned to his former ally England, and declared war on France.

Napoleon marched against Russia with a splendid army, but owing to indecision, he engaged in battle too late. He obtained a victory at *Borodino,* but instead of pursuing the enemy, he hesitated again. On reaching Moscow, he found neither food nor people. The town had been emptied, and had been abondoned by the Russians. At night a fire broke out. The whole city was in flames, and many soldiers perished in the fire. I heard that Napoleon's retreat from Moscow was one of the most terrible events in history. His army had numbered 250,000; now 12,000 men were left. Winter had come on suddenly. Contrary to his wonted foresight Napoleon had made no arrangement for supplies. On the wearisome way back, the army dwindled steadily. The plight of the soldiers was heart-breaking. The men died of starvation or were frozen to death. The few that were left, reached the town *Vilna* almost in rags in a horrid condition.

I heard that after many more wars in which Napoleon suffered defeats, the patience and resources

of France were exhausted, and Napoleon was asked to abdicate. He wanted to do so in favour of his son; but those in power, mainly the victorious Alexander of Russia decided in favour of the *Bourbons* and *Louis* XVIII was called to rule France. Napoleon retired to the Island *Elba*, and I heard that at the same time poor Josephine expired at 'Malmaison' in the arms of her two children. It seemed to me that with the divorce of Josephine and his marriage to Marie Luise of Austria, Napoleon's luck had departed.

Meanwhile, Julie had become the helpmate of my master. They had formed a warm friendship which grew into love, and in the summer 1813 Julie became the wife of my master. Once again I saw him happy although I knew he loved her differently than he had loved Jaqueline. The Viscount, whose adopted daughter Julie was, had given his consent to the union at once. My master's brother who had wife and children now, attended the wedding, and so did Jaqueline's brother who was still the faithful friend of Georges. The newly married couple occupied the pretty cottage in the grounds of Villa Clementia, and as far as I could see, they both were extremely happy.

The reading hours were not interrupted for long. After the wedding they started again and the Viscount decided to have a go at English poetry. His favourite poets were *Shakespeare, Keats, Shelley*; but *Byron* he did not care for so much. Strange to say he loved the poetry of *Burns* even more than *Milton's*, a

taste which I could not understand. He said there was a fresh emotional tenderness in Burn's poetry, and he recited, sometimes:

"My love is like a red, red Rose
That's newly blown in June...
My love is like a melody
That's sweetly played in tune."

He said: "Burns in like a sweet-scented wild flower in the woods; but Milton is like a stately, austere lily, cultivated in a garden."

Early in 1815 Napoleon escaped from Elba and proceeded to Paris where he entered the Palace of the Tuileries in great triumph. Louis XVIII had fled and the French people hailed the return of their hero. But he had changed. He used to be lean; spirited; silent; hatching his plans in secrecy. Now he was fat, spiritless, talkative, discussing his war-plans with his officers, asking their opinions. He used to strike and never hesitate; now he could not decide and often knew not what to do.

It was in June 1815 that the Famous Battle of Waterloo was fought. Napoleon was defeated by the Duke of Wellington and the German General Blucher. After that he knew that the game was up and I heard that he took refuge on the English war-ship "Bellerophon". He was kept there until August and was then transferred to the "Northumberland" which took him to St. Helena. In this exile he remained up to his death, in May 1821, surrounded by many of his friends, till to the end receiving the most generous

treatment by the British. After his death Louis XVIII remounted the French throne.

So ended the brilliant career of Napoleon, only five years after his unlucky second marriage, and I think sometimes his Empire was washed away by the tears of unhappy Josephine.

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When the Viscount came to know that the first part of Goethe's immortal drama "Faust" had been published, he secured several copies and the reading commenced at once. He listened with much interest and when my master had finished the book, he had to read it again. The Viscount was anxious to have the second part to know how Goethe had concluded the drama; but the second part was not in sight yet and the old man had to practise patience.

I learnt that the whole weight of the drama rested on a wager, or contract, Faust had concluded with Mephistopheles. Faust was an elderly scholar who asserted that he had known all there can be known to a mortal. He had tasted all that life could offer. The world and all it contained appeared to him trifling and tawdry, not worthy of the pursuit of a wise man. Nothing interested him; nothing could tempt him any longer. But Satan vowed that he would tempt him with something that Faust would find worth living for. It was agreed, that if Satan succeeded and Faust would say to him "Ah! I want to live for this," at that moment he had lost the wager and he had forfeited his soul to the Devil.

Meanwhile I heard that the philosophy of "*Fichte*" had given rise to the Romantic School in Germany. It was said that "the aim of Romanticists was to assert for modern feeling the right of a freer more varied utterance than was provided for it by the forms of classic literature which was found to be tame, prosaic and colourless. To enrich it with new elements, the writers went back to Medievalism in which daily life had not been divorced from poetry. They drew enthusiastic pictures of the Middle Ages, the charms of chivalry, the devout piety which was supposed to regulate the conduct of prince and peasant alike and which revealed itself in the splendid architecture and gorgeous ritual. Romanticists pointed to Oriental life, and then began the serious study of Persian and Sanskrit and the translating of the works of Oriental writers." It was said that works of Lessing, Schiller and Goethe contained already the romantic element and all that was best in it.

I knew what this rise of the 'Romantic School' meant. Since the advent of Islam so-called Romanticism had run through the veins of all European poetry, mostly unnoticed by the poets themselves. But now once again the spirit of Islamic culture had asserted itself in the mind of man consciously. The Viscount secured a regular crop of books translated from Oriental writers and there was reading and reading without end. *Rumi*, *Saadi*, *Hafiz* and *Jami* were explored in turn. A poem by Jami called: "The Creation of the World", delighted and surprised the Viscount. It ran as follows:

"From all eternity the Beloved (God) unveiled His beauty in the solitude of the Unseen;

He held up the mirror to His own face, He displayed His loveliness to Himself.

He was both the spectator and the spectacle; no eye but His had surveyed the universe.

All was 'One', there was no duality, no pretence of 'mine' and 'thine'.

The vast orb of heaven, with its myriads incomings and outgoings, was concealed in a single *point.*

The creation lay cradled in the sleep of non-existence, like a child ere it has breathed.

The eye of the Beloved, seeing what was not, regarded nonentity as existent.

Although He beheld His attributes and qualities as a perfect whole in His own essence,

Yet He desired that they should be displayed to Him in another mirror,

And that each one of His eternal attributes should become manifest accordingly in a diverse form,

Therefore He created the verdant fields of time and space and the life-giving garden of the world......................"

This was not the whole of the poem; but it was here that the Viscount interrupted my master clapping his hands, praising the poet. He said that indeed the creation was a reflection of God. My master had to read the whole poem again; and afterwards *Jalaluddin Rumi*, the Persian Poet and founder of the *Mevlevi*

order of dervishes, was being taken up. I heard my master read the following:

"I died as mineral and became a plant,
I died as plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was man.
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar
With angels blest; but even from angelhood
I must pass on: All except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
I shall become what no man ever conceived.
Ah let me not exist! for non-existence
Proclaims in organ tones, "*to Him we shall return.*"

"Extraordinary," said the Viscount: "This appears to be an evolutionary theory par excellence in a nutshell." After this, my master charmed the Viscount with Rumi's poem of the wise man, who walked with a lamp in his hand by daylight through the town. When asked what he was searching, he answered: "I am sick of brutes and demons. I am in search of a *human being.*"

"Quite right," said the Viscount, "a true human being is ever a rare commodity."

The verses my master read after this, were by the great Persian mystic "*Abu Said Ibn Abi 'L Khair*":

"Not until every mosque beneath the sun
Lies ruined, will our holy work be done;
And never will true Musalman appear
Till faith and infidelity are one."

For a moment the Viscount seemed puzzled. Then he nodded thoughtfully, and said: "Clever fellow that poet,......I know exactly what he means,......only it is a bit difficult to describe it."

I wondered myself at what I had heard. Then in a flash I had caught the meaning, and I interpreted the lines in the following way:

"Unless a spiritual union of all men is effected that has no longer need of any places of worship; and unless good and bad merge into one synthesis and cancel each other, evolving into a third angelic element, man shall never be perfect." My master now read some lines of the great Moslem mystic *Ibn al-Arabi*, who was born in Spain in the 13th century and who is said to have exerted a profound influence on Moslem and on Medieval Christian religious philosophy. The lines my master read were:

"My heart is capable of every form;
A cloister for the monk, a fane for idols,
A pasture for gazelles, the votary's Kaba,
The tables of the *Torah*, the Koran.
Love is the faith I hold: wherever turn
His camels, still the one true faith is mine."

This was very much applauded by all present.

"Yes, God is Love," declared the Viscountess. Her husband nodded and was silent. But I shook my head and said to myself: "Perhaps God is Beauty and man is Love calling God his 'Beloved'. Being ever in love with God, he also must love all that God

has created, the Idol-worshipper as well as Christian and the Jew; but if this is misunderstood by people, and carried into practice it might result in the finish of Islam."

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More poems of the great Moslem poets were usually read after dinner, and it grew often very late, because after having finished one poem my master had to read another and yet another. Then I heard the poetry and stories of Saadi's *Gulistan* (Rosegarden) and I found that the Viscount was particularly fond of *Hafiz* of *Shiraz.* He called him a divine poet. I heard that he was a great *Sufi.* I learnt that a Sufi is a person not concerned with the externals of religion but mostly with the spirit of true religion. The poet's frequent reference to wine was misleading for the ignorant. It was said that Hafiz never touched wine. But for the true Sufi poets wine was a *symbol* of the intoxicating passionate love for God. I thought the danger of such symbolism lay in the temptation for the uninitiated pseudo-Sufies to take to intoxicants to augment their mystic ecstasy; and later on I perceived in such pseudo-Sufism one of the main causes of the decline of the Moslem people.

One day my master found a very old copy of the Poet *Omar Khayyam* in the Viscount's library. It had been translated from the Latin into Italian. It was the task of the Viscountess to read these lovely quatrains to her husband; and one evening after dinner I heard:

"I saw the potter treadling at his wheel,
And what I saw I speak; I can't conceal:
To form the base and handle he had joined
The pate of *Caesar* and a beggar's heel.

* * *

These potters, moulding shapeless mass of clay
They watch, and therein wit and wisdom lay;
Such kicks and thumps, and further slaps and beats
Would mould us here, yea, think on this I pray;

* * *

The Viscount laughed heartily. But I remembered a play of Shakespeare in which the character *Hamlet* takes up a skull that a grave-digger has dug up, and says:

"Imperial *Caesar* dead and turned to clay
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away.
Oh, that the earth which kept the world in awe
Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw."

I could not help seeing that these lines of Shakespeare looked almost like a continuation of Omar Khayyam's verses, and I decided that the great Moslem Poet's idea had travelled by way of the earlier Renaissance to the pen of Shakespeare. In later centuries I saw another echo of these same lines of Omar Khayyam in Robert Browning's poem called "*Rabi-Ben-Ezra*" in which the potter and his wheel are treated. I marvelled at the extent to which those Moslem giants had influenced the literature of Christian Europe. It seemed to me that the Viscount knew all about that, as one day he said: "The Orientals are the fore-runners of all the poetry that Europe has produced so far."

When he had his acute attacks of gout, the doctor advised change. My master then read to him English and French comedies. He was fond of *Molier's* "*Malade Imaginaire*" and Shakespeare's "Midsummer Night's Dream", in which the fairy-Queen Titania falls in love with an ass. The family drove often to Paris in a carriage, visiting theatres and establishments that abounded with mirth and dance to cheer the Viscount. They went also for picnics in the lovely woods and fields in summer, taking with themselves such books that would suit the natural surroundings. Beneath the shady trees in nature's beautiful garden, I heard for the first time *Torquato Tasso's* "*Aminta*", that most musical, delicate pastoral drama, which was read by the Viscountess in the original Italian. At another time, resting on the green bank of the river *Seine*, my master read a few poems of the English poet *Wordsworth*, which he had composed in his University vacations. Then I heard the lovely lines:

"Oh glide fair stream for ever on!
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,
Till all our minds for ever flow
As thy deep waters now are flowing."

The Viscount desired to hear more of this type of poetry. He declared that here was the soothing peace that he required and the harmony that could cheer more than all the humour offered by comedy.

One day my master came across a drama translated from the Sanskrit. Its title was *Sakoontala*. It had been written by the Hindu poet *Kalidasa* about

1500 years ago. After the Viscount had heard it, he was greatly surprised, and he said: "It sounds like a Shakespearean drama. Simplicity of conception, freshness, originality and spontaneity are its dominant features. I believe it is the father of 'Drama' in comparison to which the Greek drama appears sophisticated and stale."

Then my master found a comment of Goethe which said:

"Wouldst thou the young year's blossom
And the fruits of its decline
And all by which the soul is charmed, feasted and fed......

Wouldst thou the earth and heaven
In one sole name combine......
Then I name thee, Oh Sakoontala! And then all is said!"

I was wondering how such a drama could have been produced so long before our time. At the opening of the play an actress sings the following:

"Siris blossom fair
With pollen laden
Richly deck the hair
Of many a maiden
But softly...flowers like these
Are visited by eager bees."

Again in the course of the play, when the king watches Sakoontala from behind a tree, there is the bee which worries the damsel and he says to himself:

"Ah happy bee! how boldly dost thou try
To steal the lustre from her sparkling eye,
And in thy circling movements hover near
To murmur tender secrets in her ear;
Or...as she coyly waves her hand, to sip
Voluptuous nectar from her lower lip."

I marvelled at this beautiful poetry. At the end of the play, once again the bee appears; not in reality, but in a picture of Sakoontala painted by an artist. The bee then is the 'leading theme' of the drama which makes it at the same time resemble a *musical* production. After a little thinking I remembered that on my travels I had come across many lovely works of art that stood in sharp contrast with their primitive surroundings, and then I knew that almost every great work of art is not a product of its time but comes centuries in advance, and therefore is really never appreciated by the people. That is because every such work is a product of *intuition* and not of time. Nobody thought of Sakoontala for centuries as we think of it today. Just as Greek art could never have been valued in its time as we do it now. Even Shakespeare was not appreciated in his own time as he is now.

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Time had passed silently and stealthily and had arrived quite suddenly at the year 1824, in which the death of King Louis XVIII was announced. He was succeeded by Charles X who was bigoted, stupid and ignorant and a mere tool of the Jesuits.

The Viscount had reached the age of seventy-two. Twelve months ago he had lost his wife Clementia, his excellent Italian reader, and the grief for her had aggravated his illness. He could walk but little and generally was moved about in a wheel-chair by his niece. My master led quite a happy life with Julie, although there were no children. Merciless age had not spared him but had crept into his hair to weave its silver-threads there. He was fifty-three now and I, his beard, was getting grey too. The reading hours had not been given up, and sometimes my master's brother came for a holiday from Paris with family to enliven the place a bit and to listen to poetry.

The Viscount still clamoured for the second part of 'Faust' and he said: "I believe the chap has forgotten all about it," and he was sure the public would never forgive the poet for having tantalized them so long and then not even revealed who had won the wager. The worst was that my master had begun to suffer from head-aches and sleeplessness. He suspected the reading but he never voiced his suspicion for fear of distressing the Viscount. He often visited his old friend, the brother of Jaqueline, who had lost his mother and lived in *Chaumiere Rose* with only his wife and son. My master one day complained to the village doctor about his insomnia, who gave him a few harmless sleeping-draughts which improved his condition.

It was only after five years more that the second part of Faust made its way to the literary market of the world. My master made a journey to Germany

where he purchased several German copies, and when he returned the Viscount stretched out both his shaking hands, crying like a baby: "Give it to me! Give it to me!" He snatched a copy from my master's hand, opened it and stared at the pages. But his sight had deteriorated to such an extent that even with spectacles he could see nothing but blurred print. He gave the book back to my master, asking him to read. But before doing so, his faithful reader explained that the second part of Faust had been a battle field of controversy ever since its publication, as no one could understand it. It was said to be the work of a great artist whose faculties had been impaired by age. Others had said that the work resembled a symphony of Beethoven. "Quite right," said the Viscount: "I am sure I will understand it; read to me." My master read, but I often wondered whether he knew what he was reading, for he seemed often puzzled, paused and repeated the lines. Having completed the task of reading after a struggle of many days, the Viscount said: "You will have to read all this again to me after some time. For the present I can only say that the whole bulk represents Faust's experience of all the levels of life, and having tasted all that there was to be tasted, he finds true happiness only in the thought of *freedom,* to stand on *free soil* with a *free people.* He declares this at the moment of his death and the Devil believes he has won the wager and may snatch his soul. But the heavenly hosts bear away Faust's soul, and the Devil has to realize that Faust's choice of freedom being the happiest and most worthy

acquisition, was not inspired by a temptation of hell, but was inspired in him by God. So Satan has lost the wager." And the Viscount cheered and laughed with joy as though he had seen a play. He then continued to speak: "Please read to me the last lines again when Faust meets Margaret in Heaven, the girl he had loved yet had wronged on earth, who nevertheless had loved him most faithfully. She leads Faust's soul upward." My master complying with the Viscount's request, read the following lines of the Mystic Chorus in heaven:

"All of mere transient date
As 'Symbol' showeth,
Here the inadequate
To fulness groweth,
Here the ineffable
Wrought is in 'Love'
The 'Eternal Feminine'
Draws us above."

"Yes," said the Viscount: "Margaret represents the element of 'Divine Love'; just as Dante's Beatrice who led Dante upto God." I admired the Viscount's judgement. I remembered that the Greeks thought man was the civilizer of woman. The Prophet Mohammed for the first time pronounced that woman was not only equal to man but in some respects superior. I had heard that *Ibn Arabi*, the great Moslem philosopher, was the first after Prophet Mohammed who made a public adoration of womanhood. He was not only a great philosopher, but a great poet and was called "the Chief of Saints." He was the originator of the theory

of the "Unity of Being" and in the last 800 years thousands had followed him who were not only philosophers but advanced and accomplished Saints. Ibn Arabi, being the most learned man and greatest Saint of his time, proclaimed he had sat at the feet of *Fakhrunissa*, a most saintly woman of ninety-five years of age. Since the name *Fakhrunissa* means "the pride of womanhood", Ibn Arabi had said that she was not only the pride of womanhood, but the pride of manhood and of the whole world combined, and that it was a great honour to sit at her feet.

I had heard that Ibn Arabi had been led upward by the Arab maiden *Nizam*, who was as chaste and beautiful as she was learned and accomplished, endowed with spiritual gifts. Margaret of Faust and Beatrice of Dante play the parts of Nizam, with the difference that Nizam stands miles above both of them. For Ibn Arabi, Nizam was the type of heavenly perfection and beauty, and the embodiment of "Divine Love"; and in one of his books he said: "Whenever I mention a name it is 'her' name, and whenever I mourn over an abode I mean her abode. In these poems I always signify divine influences and spiritual revelation in sublime analogies......God forbid that readers of this book and of my other poems should think of aught unbecoming to souls that scorn evil and to lofty spirits that are attached to heavenly things." I heard that he had drawn his inspiration of ideal womanhood from Prophet Mohammed's words: "On this earth I liked three things best: Flowers, Womanhood and Prayer." Lorenzo had read these words

one day from Ibn Arabi's 'best' book, called *Fusus*. I decided that it was the feminine, the tender, the motherly divine element that civilizes, refines and leads man upward, and that this fact for the first time was announced by the Prophet Mohammed when He said: "At the feet of mothers lies paradise."

Time passed on steadily. Year after year sank away into the abyss of the past. The second reading of Faust never took place as the Viscount died quite suddenly of stroke. In his will he left all his possessions to his niece Julie. To my master he left a fabulous sum of money, who gave lots of it to his brother and his friends in *Chaumiere Rose*. His head-aches never returned after he had given up reading. Julie did not reach a very high age; but died before her husband, who feeling very lonely went to live with Jaqueline's brother. He often visited the grave of the girl he had loved in his youth, and once he mentioned that he would like to be buried at her side.

On a beautiful spring evening he walked through the fragrant garden and sat on the bench where many years ago Jaqueline had died in his arms. He was very old and shaky. His hair and I, his beard, were snow-white. Presently a nightingale began to sing in one of the lilac-bushes and my master heaved a sorrowful sigh. When he retired, he took his usual sleeping draught, and then fell to sleep. In the morning that followed, no one could wake him. He had joined his love Jaqueline. Before I passed away too, I heard that it was decided to bury him at Jaqueline's side and I was very glad of that.

CHAPTER XIII

Night and Dawn

I was reborn after about thirty years out in the East that is, in the year 1898 at the very end of the nineteenth century. My master was then eighteen years old when I appeared on his chin and cheeks, and he was the same person that I had described at the beginning of my narrative which I had not started before he had reached his seventieth year round about the middle of the twentieth century. I had said then, that I was his white beard and that he had always kept me clean and was looking after me properly.

Soon after my rebirth when I had come out on his chin very many years back, I found that he was a gentle youth, the son of a Moslem land owner in the province of Sindh of India who owned several villages and was a very rich man. He had only one son (my master) and he desired him to go to England and study law.

I had come to know that the whole of India formerly had been ruled by the Moslem people whose

glory shone throughout the world, similar to that of Persia, Egypt, Turkey and Moslem Spain. But looking round I could not find any trace of all the past splendour and I noticed that the Moslems had sadly declined. I found in them all the traits I had seen in the Christian Spaniards and Visigoth when the Moslem conqueror 'Tarik' had contacted them in the eighth century. Sloth, ignorance, superstition and dirt prevailed.

My master's father was a very rough man who drank heavily. He had three wives and a number of concubines beside. I saw myriads of servants who were called by some Christian Missionaries: "The Idle Millions", as they never worked and the houses looked unswept and dirty. My master was the only son from his father's first wife who was being continuously harassed by the jealousies of the other wives who had lots of children, but all girls. These children looked dirty and were not being educated. Many maid-servants were kept for them, and I often saw these women sit and search the hair of the girls for lice. That reminded me of Jaqueline, and the court ladies of Queen Marie Antoinette, whose tremendous plastered coiffures were opened up every nine weeks only, and were teeming with vermin. They were opened to be aired and "to allow the life-stock to depart." Such a condition was unpardonable in a country like France where education thrived in the eighteenth century; but it was excusable in a land that had lost contact with education. Here in this small town was hardly a school, at that time, and no hospital or any of the many institutions of

which the early Moslems had been the founders, and which they had handed on to Christian Europe. I noticed that the Christians had made good use of them, for this country was ruled by a Christian power of the West, namely by England. Schools and hospitals were being built by them, and the backward Moslems looked with awe at all those things of which their forefathers had been the authors.

The town was small with very narrow, crooked, unpaved streets, and the houses were built of mud and unbaked bricks. Through the streets walked goats and cows at their sweet will, and in the bazaar the sweetmeats and other edibles were black with flies. There were evil smells of stagnant waters. No drainage existed, and diseases raged everywhere. Women were secluded and not allowed to go out, unless wrapped in extinguishers. The inhabitants of the town consisted of Hindus and Moslems, and there were the Christian officials and Missionaries which seemed the only educated people. The rest were looked down upon as inferior races and were not permitted to enter English clubs.

I heard that in other larger towns lived lots of *Goanese*, who were Roman Catholics. They were natives of the Goa settlement in India and their original home had been Portugal. There were also many *Parsis*. The forefathers of these people had fled to India at the time of the Moslem conquest of Persia. They had refused to embrace Islam. They were still followers of the Zoroastrian faith and had settled in this country. Both, Goanese and Parsis were not allowed to become

members of the English clubs either. Only the man of whatever creed, who had become an I. C. S. and belonged to the *Indian Civil Service*, could become a member of an English club, but even then his membership was only nominal. Few English officials mixed with him and as a rule he did not care to frequent the club. Parsis, Hindus, Moslems and Goanese built their own clubs later on, where they could be free and happy.

I found that the *Mullas* or priests seemed the only custodians of the Koran. In such a time of ignorance I thanked God for that, otherwise even the Koran might have disappeared, since Moslems seemed to have forgotten their religion altogether, although I saw that children were instructed by the Mullas in a most mechanical way to read the Arabic lines of the Koran without understanding them. One day my young master found a book on top of an old broken English wardrobe. The book was covered with dust and most of its pages were eaten by white ants. The book was the Koran of which the scholar Jacobi had said in the seventeenth century that it was the greatest treasure the world did possess. My master who was a very religious-minded youth, cleaned the book and took it to his room where he put it into his drawer.

I could see that superstition often took the place of religion. Shrine worship was practised, and holy men, called *Pirs*, who often were pretenders, were called upon to give their verdicts whether a sick

child would get well or not, or whether the child to be born would be a girl or a boy. Outside the villages were certain trees to the twigs of which all kinds of rags were tied. Such a tree was supposed to be a sacred one, and a woman who wished for a child or anything else, tied a rag to one of the twigs of the tree. Love potions too were in vogue. Such a potion was put into the drink of a bride-groom to induce love for the bride. It often brought on severe illness or even death.

The brother of my master's father came sometimes for a chat. He had a big black beard who was a great friend of mine. He told me many things in beard-language that had happened before I was born. One day I heard from him the following story: "When my master was about fifteen years old, his father compelled him to marry the daughter of his brother, a very weak small girl of eleven years. On the day of the wedding, amid the ear-splitting noise of beating of drums, the girl was wrapped in very heavy silken robes, was loaded with mountains of flower-garlands and ornaments, and then was made to sit under a stiff bridal-veil, that resembled a dome, which closed right over and all round her whole body. The veil was of a thick fabric and was piled with more flower-garlands and heavy ornaments. After quite a long time the bridegroom was called. He was given a mirror to hold it before the face of his bride so as to see her features first in the mirror before seeing them in reality. The boy raised the bridal-veil on one side, and then it was discovered that the tortured little

girl had died from fear and suffocation in her airless bridal-prison. The wedding turned into a funeral, and the boy was so horror-struck that he vowed never to marry.

When my master's father grew sick of any of his wives, he ill-treated her. But this vice was not confined to the Moslems here. Later on when I was with my master in England, I saw and heard many things which enlightened me. I noticed that, although the ghost of the *Troubadour* with all its chivalry hovered still about the lady of high rank; the middle class husband expected unconditional obedience from his wife. He was entitled to beat her and often did so. It was supposed to be her 'duty' to serve him. There was a proverb which said: "The woman, the dog and the wallnut-tree, the more you beat them the better they be." It was said that, "woman was practically in pawn, having neither money nor social power. As a summit to the family pile in the drawing-room stood the man's armchair, but it was woman's duty to sit *upright*." To the low class woman the cruelty of ancient Greece and the barbarism of the primitive Goths still applied: "In the 19th century women were used in coal mines instead of ponies to pull the trams. They did this more than ten hours a day, stripped to the waist caked black with sweat and dust." Like animals they were beaten when they exhibited fatigue. I heard that women could be whipped in public, and that upto 1824, a woman who talked too much was made to wear a "brank". The report said: "A brank was an iron frame fixed to

the head. A plate which entered the mouth prevented the tongue from moving. Sometimes the tongue was cut and bleeding. The branks are no oddities. A large number are to be found in museums." I heard that women stood in the pit of London theatres for hours, and though they often fainted, their men sat tight.

So strong was the feeling of inferiority of women that in 1843 when American women appeared in London at the anti-slavery congress, the meeting declared that it was *contrary to the ordinances of the 'Almighty' that women should sit in congress and they were excluded.*

*   *   *   *   *

All that I had seen so far in Sindh was about the year 1900. The prediction I had made when Oliver Cromwell had sown the seeds of English greatness, had come true. The British Commonwealth had grown and had spread all over the globe. British power reigned supreme. British justice and honesty were well-known everywhere. British invincibility was still a fact. Ruling India, the British never interfered with the customs and religions of the inhabitants. Tolerance was practised. British law applied to English and Indian alike; if not altogether in practice, at least in theory. In short, all the traits similar to those of the early Moslems were apparent.

But the British bureaucracy out here had its own code of exclusiveness. It was an inflexible steel-frame. The British officials were proud and unrelenting. They could not bring themselves to look

upon Indians as their brethren, because according to their views, they belonged to the inferior races. For them, all Eastern races, even the fairest were 'Blacks'. The British officials were narrow-minded and conceited. They never troubled to study the life of the people they were ruling. The colour-bar could never be overcome and the woman who married an Indian was ostracized and despised.

I heard that most of the ruling princes of the country had been pensioned off, and spent their time in hunting, feasting and domestic intrigues. They led the lives of idle children that must not interfere with politics and administration. I found that this land was a depository of all types of humanity; from the most depraved up to the most sublime and spiritual. Often I noticed that people were cruel to animals. Hawkers would load small donkeys beyond their capacity and beat them till they bled. But elsewhere it was the same. Not so many years before this, dogs were used in Europe to pull milk-carts and were often beaten so mercilessly that they died. Soon after, Europe became conscious of having been studiously cruel to animals. May be they had realized the Koranic saying: "Fear God in respect to animals, for they are a species like you and shall be gathered to God as well." Or may be they had learnt Buddah's lesson. Buddah who shrank from hunting a worm even! When many years later legislation came to be enacted against the cruelty to animals, the church took up a strong opposition, saying that it was a heathenish idea and that nowhere in the Bible it was mentioned

that man should not be cruel to animals. For many years to come the church vehemently opposed such measures, thinking Christianity was in danger of becoming pagan.

I heard from my friend, the black beard, what a sinful man the father of my master was. By bribing lawyers and witnesses, he obtained his neighbour's land, making a false case against him, alleging that the land had originally belonged to him. Not only that; but conceiving a passion for the pretty wife of one of his overseers, he had him killed and then married his widow. He also bribed assistant engineers to manage to let him have more water for his lands than was given to the other land-owner. He shrank from no crime, and I was sorry that my pious master had such a wicked father. But I realized that it was hazardous to generalise from a few stray instances and form dangerous prejudices. I noticed very soon that Moslems had preserved very many of their former fine qualities. On his strolls through the country, my master found real honest and religious people among the peasant class. He found hospitality and generosity. He found respect for white-haired elders. He found that never an old ugly woman was suspected of witchcraft and therefore persecuted. He found peasants kneeling at sunset in prayer. He found hermits in meditation. He found goatherds playing sweet tunes on their flutes at eventide, and saw them content with their unleavened bread, their curds and their hookahs. He found them helping their neighbours, and since peasant women were not secluded, they

were helpmates of their husbands and their children were often well-cared for.

The Moslems loved their children passionately. Be they dirty, ugly or stupid, even be they idiots they were idolized by their Moslem parents and often became literally their dictators. I had not seen such a thing in Greece where children often were exposed to die of starvation, nor even in modern England. I remember that in the 19th century children were employed in the cotton-mills in Lancashire to work 14 hours a day and were strapped to their benches to prevent them from falling off. I heard that ten years before I was reborn here, it was decided that children under ten years should not be employed in textile factories, and I heard that some time before this, one mill-owner said he never employed children under five years of age; and when I saw Europeans look down upon Moslems, I remembered the words of Christ: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam in thine own eye."

I discovered more vices among the rich than the poor, and among many of the so-called educated, who as the Koran puts it, "Are those that have read books and have neither understood nor have acted upon what they have read, and are like donkeys carrying the load of books on their backs without the least benefitting by them." There were also those who had begun to ape the ways of their rulers, adopting all the evils of modern Western Society. The fashionable

folk, among them many Moslems who disregarded morals and looked with contempt upon their own religion associating it with all the vices and vulgarities they beheld around.

Nevertheless, I found much good and many hidden noble qualities in the Moslem community, and gradually I perceived a glitter of gems beneath the dust of ignorance and deterioration. Gems that only needed digging up and polishing. Although the Moslem people seemed dull, sleeping and almost dead, they could be aroused to enthusiasm and highest emotion by a single line of *Shah Latif,* a Sindhi poet, whom I consider one of the greatest poets in the world. We beards know all languages and I was able to read the poetry of this genius in the original, and my opinion was, that his poetry is an embodiment of *music* at the same time incorporating *Idea* to such a high degree that music and idea form an indivisible "Whole" which makes it impossible to translate this poetry into another language without destroying its indescribable beauty. People who could appreciate such poetry proved that they had *heart* if not head, and where heart beats, life exists and could leap into creative activity at any given time, for it is 'emotion' that is the creative power, and the producer of all intellect and understanding.

I was sure that the Moslem resurrection was not very far off, as I knew after every ebb the tide must return. Every country had to taste this ebb to its bitter end. Every country had to struggle from the darkest depth up to the light with tremendous

difficulty, and such a struggle is always an ugly sight, for it is a struggle from the mire of ignorance up to the flower-meads of understanding, and the countries that stand by and scorn the plight of such a struggling people, nay even prevent them from succeeding, instead of offering a helping hand, are among the condemned of God and sooner or later will be plunged into a similar condition.

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The loveliest festival in this country was when after thirty days fasting every man, woman and child wore clean gay-coloured garments and went to the mosques for prayers. The Prophet Mohammed had said: "Do not prevent your women from going to the mosque." But as many instructions of the Prophet were forgotten, this was one of them and the women were obliged to worship at home. But the children were among the most enthusiastic devotees. Even very small children clamoured to be allowed to fast, and I remembered the words of Christ: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." And indeed, apart from their mischievous moods, when they should be corrected or even slapped, children who longed with such a zeal to fast and pray reminded in their innocence and purity of little angels from heaven.

The holiday that followed after the thirty days' fasting in the month of *Ramzan*, was called: *Eid-ul-Fitre*; meaning: "Feast after Fasting." What a multitude I beheld that made its way to the various mosques,

giving proof that Moslems indeed were very much alive. Generally the prayers were performed on a vast open ground where at least a hundred thousand people could assemble, and there all classes high and low worshipped side by side, and all ranks were equal before God the Incomprehensible. On that day all their differences were merged; all hatred, jealousies; greed for worldly possessions and power were swept away. All evil designs were forgotten by minister and servant alike. On that day hearts were full of forgiveness and repentance, and those who had been enemies formerly, embraced each other after prayers, often with tears in their eyes. All were brothers again as in the Prophet's days.

What a beautiful thing it was to watch for the re-appearance of the moon that marked the end of the fast! Once the year the eyes of the most ignorant, the most worldly and narrow-minded were drawn upwards, were drawn to the heavens where the lovely silver crescent appeared in the skies. Once the year man was induced to admire the beauty of nature; and what an admiration it was! "The moon has been sighted!" it echoed throughout the land. Telegrams were sent from town to town in these modern days to convey the glad tidings to all, and on the next day there was rejoicing and feasting. Presents were given, greetings were exchanged, all this signifying that man had once again struggled through self-imposed "Submission to the divine Law," controlling his passions and low desires and now had risen victoriously to freedom. The Islamic Grand Synthesis had been

symbolized. Not only in this country, but wherever Moslems breathed, all over the world the feast of *Eid-ul-Fitre* was celebrated in like manner.

My master's cousin, the brother of the little girl who had died under the bridal-veil, was the steady companion of my master. I had come to know that the boys had played together when children, had gone to school together and later on had studied side by side in the same college in the Capital of Sindh. My master had decided for law and his cousin, Hussein for general history. His father disliked his choice as he wanted him to study medicine, but Hussein went on strike and after much wrangling, his father gave in.

When the boys had taken their B. A. degrees, before leaving for England they went on a tour throughout India, to acquaint themselves with other parts of the country and see all that there was to be seen. It had been arranged that they should stay at *Lahore*, a town in the Punjab, with a friend of Hussein's father, a Dr. Mumtaz, who had lots of land in Sindh but had retired to his birth place, Lahore. He was a very wise old man, who beside agriculture, had made history his study, and knew more about the past of countries than the greatest of historians. He was also the father of one of the professors who had instructed my master and Hussein at the college. He received the two young men with the greatest kindness, made them comfortable, in his charming dwelling *Tara Manzil*, and proposed that he himself would accompany them to the places of historical interest, and act, so to say, as guide, furnishing all

the explanations that were required. My master and his friend were very grateful for such an offer. They felt very homely with Dr. Mumtaz, who inspite of his sixty-five years was very active, very communicative, and a devout Moslem, and desired the two young men to call him "Uncle".

One evening, after a sumptuous meal, when the old man, smoking his Hookah, perceived how enthusiastically the two young men talked about their prospective trip to England, he said warningly: "Go steady my boys, all that glitters is not gold. I have lived myself for many years in England. I have found many things there which disillusioned me. I have been mostly disappointed in books of history on all subjects. History of literature, art, science, philosophy, but mostly history of men and religion, have given me many sleepless nights." "What do you mean, uncle?" asked Hussein rather crestfallen. Dr. Mumtaz put his Hookah aside, and said: "I mean that the absence of truth was conspicuous in every historical book in those days, and to my grief truth is still absent in such books which are being written in these modern days. Yes, my dear boys, you may believe me that hell is peopled with historians." "I hope I shall not be one of those," said Hussein, having regained his cheerful disposition. He attached no great importance to what Dr. Mumtaz had said. He and my master thought the old man was exaggerating. They were not inclined to disbelieve what they had read in the books at college. Their Professors had never informed them that these books contained certain things that were

not to be believed. They preferred to trust, and believe, and remain happy. I was quite agitated at their mentality. Although the long grey beard of Dr. Mumtaz had discussed with me lots of things, we had not yet talked about the 'lying' Historians, and I wondered what his opinion on this point would be.

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Hussein and my master were of the same age, namely, twenty-one. Directly Hussein had come to know that he was to go to England, he made a habit of shaving himself. He advised his cousin to follow his example, but my master had vowed never to marry and never to shave his beard, and he kept his vows. Hussein was a good-looking fellow. Tall and well-built and of fair complexion. He had soft, wavy hair and dark, sparkling eyes. He was not married yet. His father, shocked at the tragedy his daughter had met with, refrained from arranging an early marriage for his son and thought it was better to let him choose for himself later on.

Dr. Mumtaz was preparing to go on travel with the two young men. Before starting he enlightened his guests on various subjects, and his talks often assumed the character of long lectures. On one such occasion, when Hussein had asked him about some historical incidents, he commenced to speak. From one subject he plunged into another, and I thought his talk would never end. My master and Hussein listened with great interest. I opened my ears as wide as I could, and this is what I heard:

"We do not know much about the dim past of our primitive ancestors, with their Taboo, fetish and witch-doctors. The average man looks upon those remote times as vast empty spaces with but a few hints of life that move about like vague shadows. Many historians have taken advantage of the ignorance and carelessness of man, and when and wherever they have found such an empty space of the dim past, a period the events of which had not been properly ascertained yet, and had not drawn the attention of man by some sensational upheaval, they got busy, cramming such a space with events that never had happened. They filled it with fictitious splendour so as to enhance the importance of a country dear to them, giving it what we would call: 'A glorious past'. The purpose of this was mostly to belittle the greatest historical event, namely, the appearance of 'Islam'. Having made a close study, I found that almost every non-Moslem people owing to conservatism of mind, do not like to admit the advanced position that Islam does occupy in evolution. Therefore they must either bring Islam down to their own level, or end by saying that their sacred books had possessed long before Islam all that the Koran teaches, not realizing that had the Prophet Mohammed not come, they would be today in a mire of confusion and ignorance."

Here Dr. Mumtaz interrupted his talk and asked Hussein: "Have you read Edward Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire'?" "Indeed, I have, uncle," answered Hussein, and Dr. Mumtaz continued: "Then you must have come across the page where

the author says in so many words that he could not imagine what the condition of the world would be, had Prophet Mohammed not appeared. Very few historians are honest enough to acknowledge that Prophet Mohammed was the real saviour of the world. A world that, nearly a thousand years after Christ, still had been steeped in superstition, akin to idol-worship, abominable customs and ghastly ignorance. Most of the narrow-minded historians put their primitive egotism above truth and are inclined to write Christianity as the last religion and so produce an anachronism, turning history up-side-down and destroying the theory of evolution of religion. Yes, to belittle the last and the youngest religion 'Islam', they try to create for non-Moslem countries pasts that boast of veritable modern civilizations; and the more time passes, and the more the greatness of Islam is being realized, the louder become the trumpets blown by such historians. According to them all that is found in the Koran was already present in the *Talmud,* the works of Plato and Aristotle, in the sacred books of Zoroastrians, in the *Bagavat Gita* and the *Vedas*. But like a thief who always forgets something when he robs a house, by which he is betrayed, so the concocted and interpolated lines stand in sharp contrast with something else which the interpolator has forgotten to remove and which betray the true conception of the people whose holy book he has manipulated. So the daily Prayer of the Jews in the Talmud runs as follows: 'Oh God thou art our God. Thou art the God of the Universe. I thank Thee that Thou hast not made me a woman'. Where the idea of humanity is so narrow that woman cannot be

included in it, the Universality of God does not exist. Therefore the line 'God of the Universe', must have been brought from outside later on. The fact is that the phrase 'God of the Universe' has not existed in any religion before Islam, and wherever we find it, it must be a later addition that was made in Moslem times. Or else, the meaning of 'Universe' in those books most probably was confined to the earth whose roof was called the 'firmament', a star-studded canopy. Jews any way were forbidden to worship craven images. But theirs was not a monotheism either, such as we do understand it, since we read in the Bible Exodus 19.11. the following words uttered by *Jetro*, Moses' father-in-law: 'Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly, He was above them'. With these words he admits the existence of other gods but says *Jehova* is the greatest among them. This once and for all gives the true conception of the God of Israel, and shuts out the universality of God. We know at once that the Jewish God is a partial one, who fights for Israel and enjoins the slaughter of man, woman and child of the enemy. All this is in great contrast with the Jewish *Kabbalah*." Dr. Mumtaz paused for a moment and Hussein asked: "What is the *Kabbalah* uncle?" Then the old man answered: "It is the Jewish system of theosophy. A philosophy entirely based on the writings of Moslem philosophers, Ibn Arabi in particular. The Koran tells us: 'God says only '*Be*' and it **is**'. This '*Be*' has been expanded for the sake of man to grasp it, into a slower process by which God creates, preserves, or equilibrates and again lets disappear any manifestation

which He has created. Man might call the above, three attributes of God. God has no attributes in reality, but in order to make man understand attributes come into existence. By the mystic Moslem philosophers these so-called attributes were termed *emanations* of God. The Jews adopted this term. They called God *En Soph* and His emanations *Sephiroth*. There were ten emanations, but the first three of those were the most important and constituted the first *Triad* or trinity that forms a strict union with God. It is said that when the first *Sephira* assumed a form, it produced everything in the shape of male and female as things could not continue in any other form. This makes me laugh because when God says: '*Be*' it includes everything from the start up to its end, or its infinity in which the poor shapes of male and female have no hand. Esoteric writers try to stretch God's '*Be*' into a long process and try to analyse it, and by doing so they create nothing, but a symbolic confusion which they call 'mysticism'. Well, from the first three emanations named: 'The Crown, Wisdom and Intelligence', which formed the first triad, other three emanations came forth, namely, Love, Justice and Beauty, which formed the second triad and so forth. In this way the '*Archetypal*' man was formed, and I think I will let you have a look at the sketch of this Archetypal man." With these words he went over to a book-shelf and took out a large book, saying that it was Volume XIII of the 9th Edition of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica". He searched page 810, and before exhibiting the sketch, he said: "The modern critics declare that the *Kabbalah* is not genuine, and this is what they say:

The *Zohar* (book of *Kabbalah*) pretends to be a compilation made by 'R. Simon b. Yochi' who flourished about 70-110 A.D. of doctrines which God communicated to Adam in Paradise and which have been received uninterruptedly from the mouths of patriarchs and prophets. Among the facts however, established by modern criticism which prove the *Zohar* to be a compilation of the 13th century, the following are the most prominent. No. 1: The *Zohar* praises most fulsomely R. Simon, its reputed author and exalts him above Moses. No. 2: It mystically explains the Hebrew vowel-points which did not exist till 570. No. 3: The compiler borrows two verses from the celebrated hymn: 'The Royal Diadem' written by *Ibn Gebirol*, who was born about 1021 A.D. No. 4: It mentions the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders and retaking of the Holy City by the Saracens. No. 5: It speaks of the comet which appeared in Rome on July 15th, 1264 under Pontificate Urban IV. No. 6: By a slip the *Zohar* assigns a reason why its contents were not revealed before 1300-1306 A.D. No. 7: The doctrine of the *En Soph* and the Sephiroth was not known before the 13th century. No. 8: The very existence of the *Zohar* itself was not known prior to the 13th century. Hence it is believed *Moses de Leon* (ab. 1305) who first circulated and sold the *Zohar* was himself the author. That the eminent scholars both in the synagogue and church should have been induced to believe in its antiquity, is owing to the fact that the *Zohar* embodies many opinions and doctrines which existed among the Jews prior to the time of Christ......"

Dr. Mumtaz put the book down and said with a sarcastic smile: "So the plagiarists deceive the world by interspersing cunningly their lies with a few truths; but as I said before; the thief always forgets something in the house which he robs, by which he is betrayed." The old man now invited his guests to look at the sketch of the Archetypal man. Both, my master and Hussein stared with great surprise at the diagram which resembled the drawing by an art-student who had classified the different parts of the human body by means of lines and numbers. Dr. Mumtaz laughed merrily at the astonishment of the young people and then he said: "After the advent of Islam non-Moslem religions have been reformed. Islamic ideas have been grafted on their doctrines, all of which point like compass-needles to the Islamic pole. Yet because these grafted strangers were not exhibited under their true names and were not absorbed, they did not give rise to realization. They remained mere 'talk' while the old, stale orthodoxy with all its out-worn customs was dragged on in actuality, and is practised up to the present day. Even the great Jewish philosopher *Spinoza*, who lived in the 18th century, whose forefathers were Spanish and who had absorbed all the Moslem traditions, in his political treatise under chapter 'Democracies' excludes women and slaves from voting, as women are 'under man and master'. He goes to the length of saying that it is not a human institution but nature's own law that woman be ruled by man and that 'women have not by nature equal rights to men'." And Dr. Mumtaz concluded: "So you see, one foot goes forward, following the Islamic

evolutionary progress, and the other foot is stuck in mummified conservatism, in the decay of out-worn customs, heresay and symbolic doctrines. Even Protestantism, which I call the Christian child of Islam, the very best and most free of all, is still fettered to Orthodoxy."

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Although Dr. Mumtaz had prepared to take his guests round India to show them places and things of interest, I knew that a request for some lectures had arrived from one of the local colleges, the date of which had been fixed a week hence, and Dr. Mumtaz, who had accepted the invitation of the principal could not possibly leave Lahore until he had delivered those lectures.

I noticed that the old Historian had lots of friends, Moslems as well as Hindus who often visited him and joined him at meals, discussing with him many subjects some of which were of trivial and others of most intellectual character. I liked the Punjab Moslems. They were a military people; tall, strong and of fair complexion. They were spirited and intelligent, hospitable and chivalrous, and inspite of their robust health, they were ever ready to help the weak. Most of them were devout Moslems. I had also a chance to catch a glimpse of the women of Lahore, and those I saw at all were extremely good-looking. Sometimes there was music after dinner when musicians had been called, and I was thrilled by the sweet strains I heard, full of tenderness and emotion,

and I marvelled at the skill with which the singers and players, Hindus and Moslems performed their art. Poetry too was recited and I made the aquaintance of many poets.

One evening when Dr. Mumtaz was alone with my master and Hussein, and again was in a mood to talk, I heard a lot about the Hindu religion; but one had to take care not to lose the thread of his talk, as it was his habit to run from one subject into another. Earlier in the day a Hindu gentleman had called, and when Hussein asked him afterwards his opinion about the Hindus, he had set the ball rolling.

Dr. Mumtaz said some of his best and most sincere friends were Hindus. He praised their race, their character and their ancient culture. He said the prophet *Krishna* was one of the most beautiful figures in Hindu history. But he disapproved of the caste-system. He was afraid that it was one of the cases he had mentioned before, and conservatism and orthodoxy was being dragged on still at the present day inspite of the Islamic wave of evolution that ever pressed forward. In harmony with evolution one foot was striding on, adopting all the modern externalities, while the other foot, as he had said before, was dragging behind, hindered with a dead, useless past that once upon a time had been gloriously alive, but now was a mere skeleton. Polytheism was also practised even in these days. The Monotheism found in the *Rigveda* was not a true one. The poet worshipped one god which was his favourite god that he had

placed above all the other gods which he also recognized and respected. "Indeed," continued Dr. Mumtaz, "even in the beautiful *Bagvata Gita* which was written a thousand years after Krishna by a poet who had a dream of Krishna and Arjuna, we find that Krishna himself asks Arjuna to maintain caste, and he says: 'Do not mix up castes'. Here again we see that there is a forward march in the Gita only in words and ideas that never have been realized, and never have been translated into action, owing, to old conservatism. The Bagvata Gita is a poetic work of high merit, but the great pity is that we do not even know *when* and by whom it was written, as there is no date and no name of poet; and it is therefore that some writers ascribe the Gita to its commentator *Shanker* who lived in the 8th century, that is almost a century after the Moslems had arrived in India at the Malabar coast. Before this, we really know nothing about the Gita as it is not mentioned by ancient writers such as *Kalidasa* and others. It is a fact that it was grafted on the *Mahabharata*, the great Sanskrit epic poem which was collected at a much earlier date. No authentic history did exist in those days. One never knows when and by whom anything was written. Poor historians of later times simply had either to guess or prove things with archaeological help. Even the Bible has no authentic dates as it puts down Adam's birth at 5,000 years ago, while we know that man is on earth at least since a hundred thousand years.

In ancient times nothing but myth and legends existed, superstitions, magic, ceremonial symbol,

demons, and all manner of good and evil spirits. It was a world of fables and confusion, cruelty and barbarism. A well-known writer informs us that India lived in mystery for thousands of years; that it is impossible to say when Krishna lived and that legends were manufactured by priests who had become the equals of gods. This was the case of every country in ancient days. There was no paper and no printing press in those times and to talk of books and libraries is mere nonsense. Sacred sayings were handed down orally and were committed to writing very much later with the result that they became distorted. So it is proved that the *Vedas* are the works of innumerable authors. Additions after additions were grafted on all the sacred texts of the ancients, and there is most probably not a prophet whose sayings have been preserved in their original form."

Dr. Mumtaz paused now and smoked his hookah in silence, thinking hard. After some time he continued: "Another writer tells us that: 'In ancient Egypt the people could not even read, and no man thought of teaching them. The assumption that any one could read or buy books is a serious misconception'. No doubt, no one but the priests could read. Most probably they alone could make use of *papyrus*, which, we hear, was in use some time before Christ in Egypt, Greece, Rome and Syria. In the *Kaaba* were hanging seven poems in honour of those pre-Islamic poets whose works were worthy of being remembered. It is said they were written on 'Egyptian silk', which might have been papyrus. The Koran mentions in its

first pages 'The book, pen and ink...' *Parchment*, also called *vellum*, came into use in the fourth century. In the Koran chapter 52 lines 1–5 we read: 'Consider the mountain, and the Book written in an outstretched vellum'. From this we can safely conclude, that the Koran was written on vellum scroll *(Raqq)* and private and official letters on papyrus. Many scrolls pressed together were called a Book.

You know very well that *Hijrat* means 'Exodus', and from Hijrat, that is, Prophet Mohammed's Exodus from Mecca to Medina, the Moslem Era starts. Authenticity is so much cared for that full two volumes exist even from a German author's pen on the chronology of the Koran in which time and place of revelation of every passage not to mention *Suras*, is authoratatively given. In addition to that, hundreds of people committed to memory what was written. These men, as you know, are called *Hafiz*, (one who remembers) and at *Ramzan* when prayers are offered thousands of them stand on their legs day after day and recite the whole of the Koran from memory."

Dr. Mumtaz paused and smiled and then said with louder voice: "Yes, my boys, you may be proud of your Book in which for fourteen hundred years not a syllable, not a word, not a comma, semicolon or fullstop have been changed, but which is exactly the same as it came from the Prophet's mouth; while most other religious books are either in the nature of biographies written hundreds of years afterwards, or running collections of writings of many persons as was customary in

those days." Here Dr. Mumtaz got up and paced the room excitedly, and Hussein found an occasion to ask a question: "Is then the 'Sermon on the Mount' of Christ not authentic uncle? Surely no one but an inspired prophet could have uttered all this."

Dr. Mumtaz sat down on the divan. His excitement had evaporated and he said: "No doubt my dear boy. Those who understand know what of every prophet's utterances are the genuine parts and what has been added for the understanding of their followers. This is always clear to those who 'know' from the period of evolution in which certain prophets appeared. In every book there is something genuine that has been adulterated in course of time. Not only that, but the 'Mine-and-thine' has played a great part in this. No one cared for or even knew that there was such a thing as evolution and to bring their book up-to-date and make it superior to others, interpolations were adopted without the slightest regard for truth. Strange to say, even in these enlightened times, interpolations are going on, and those who make them do not see what a contrast they produce between the old and the new, but those who understand know how humanity looked in its infancy and what it looks now. If historical evolution is a fact, then a nation may be beautiful as a nation of 5,000 years ago, but can not claim to have grown in age the same as a nation that appears 5,000 years after. Otherwise the word 'Evolution' will have no meaning at all. From 'nature to nature's God' means that first human-beings took notice of natural objects and worshipped each in turn, till

the mind was capable of generalizing and discerning that there was analogy and union between them all and that they were the creation of '*One*'. And so from Nature to Nature's God, mind arrives in time. But that time extends over 10,000 years and every nation advances a bit in due course. A child of seven years is beautiful as a child, but it can never have the mentality of a man of forty.

Infancy goes always hand in hand with ignorance, and it is due to the ignorance of ancient people that every prophet's utterances were put up-side-down. Every prophet that we know of was an inspired prophet, whether Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Abraham, Moses or Christ. Everyone brought the word of God as it was necessary for the people of that period and owing to this there was no distinction between them, just as Prophet Mohammed says in the Koran: 'I am only a plain Warner. To me have been revealed facts as were revealed before to the people who have cut up religion into parts. Likewise 'One' Book have they cut into separate pieces, chosing a piece out of the whole for themselves in contradistinction with the Universal God'."

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It was on the next evening after dinner that Dr. Mumtaz sat with his guests on the spacious balcony of his house smoking his 'hubble-bubble' of which he was extremely fond. The evening was very cool and pleasant, the moon had risen; stars gleamed in the clear skies and fragrance of flowers drifted

from the garden below. It was the beginning of April and the days of Lahore were quite enjoyable and no too warm yet.

Dr. Mumtaz had been silent during the meal and I had noticed that Hussein who had developed a great amount of curiosity, was anxious to hear him talk, and when the old man laid aside his hookah-stick and leaned back in his chair contemplating the moon, Hussein asked him a question: "What is your notion on Buddhism, uncle?" he said. Dr. Mumtaz considered for a while, then he turned his head and looking at Hussein he said: "Buddha teaches that this life is an illusion, and to be free from existence becomes the supremest goal. If there is any approach to universalism it is in Buddhism, but only on the negative side. The philosophical view of the negative idea not being graspable by the ordinary people of those times, the only result was renunciation of the world in the common sense of the word and the adopting of a monastic life. While on the other hand Buddha himself was turned into an object of worship, exactly the thing he did not want as he wished to react the idea of seeking help from Nature powers, and he wanted to destroy love of live and the fear of death. The entire message of Buddha, as he himself said, was to create resolution in the human mind, not to love this life. In other words, his message was: 'Thou should not love life'. Just as Christianity said: 'leave everything' and: 'lose this Life.' In that they both gave negative command and the natural result was renunciation

and monasticism, which actually took place in the East and the West wherever Nature-worship had ceased to exist. This was meant to be so as a preparatory antecedent for the positive message that actually came in shape of Islam, by the abundant light of which everything could be discerned in its correct proportion and value. Either the muddle or stagnation that had been created was cleared away by the dynamic power of the spirit of Islam the proof of which is history itself.

Never before in history a human-being alone and single-handed has achieved what the Prophet Mohammed had achieved. No other religion did advance without the patronization of the established political power. Zoroastrianism was advanced by King *Gushtasp*; Buddhism by King *Ashoka*, and it was through the Roman Emperor Constantine that the Christians at all could venture to leave their hiding places. But Islam was advanced by its own founder in its founder's life-time and was not indebted to any worldly power. Here I may quote the words of the well-known author Stanley Lane-poole: 'There is no page in the world's history more marvellous than that which relates the rise of the Mohammedan power. It is the most significant instance of what personal energy unaided by a single attribute of power except its own fire can achieve, and it furnishes a standing refutation of the materialist'."

"Indeed," continued Dr. Mumtaz, "surrounded by enemies on all sides, pelted with stones, persecuted,

hunted from place to place; without money; without army or any help and patronage Prophet Mohammed conquered the world. Not with the sword as his antagonists assert, but with the light of reason, and the gospel of freedom, tolerance, humanism and learning, proclaiming that religion was 'One' which he had called 'Islam' and which was 'Submission to the Divine Law', in other words: 'Submission to the will of God' which every prophet had preached before, and that willingly or unwillingly, consciously or unconsciously every creature without exception had to submit to this law which is the root and existence of all organic and inorganic life and has operated at the very first act of creation itself.

Yes, it is the submission to that Law which gives rise to the upheavals that we call great civilizations, and Islam was the synthetic upheaval of the negativity of Christianity that had involuted and had only existed, but not really 'lived' for nearly a thousand years after Christ. The upheaval of Islam effected the resurrection of clarified Christianity when for the first time Prophet Mohammed generalized and clearly enunciated this law and called it 'Islam', adding that it was the basis of all religions which when once understood and realized must exclude the necessity of the coming of any new religion. The upheaval of Islam was thus a perfect synthesis that like every synthesis claimed positive universality not only producing a stir in its own surroundings but a world revolution, a total constructive movement of everlasting nature. Such a synthesis does not beg for support but is the giver of support to all the world.

It raises all, connects all and harmonizes all discords. Thus Islam equilibrated. It raised the down-trodden slave and proclaimed that all men are free and equal before the law. It raised degraded woman-hood and placed it on a high pedestal, for the position of woman before Islam was nothing short of that of a beast of burden all-over the globe. A Greek woman could be flogged or crucified at a slight offence of hers. 'Under the Mago-Zoroastrians woman was a slave at the caprice of man who recognized no law but that of his own will. He could divorce his wives at his pleasure'. The law-giver *Manu* emphasizes that woman must be kept in perpetual subjection. Christian popes declared woman to be an instrument of the devil. In Jewish families daughters occupied the position of servants. The father had power of life and death over them. In Egypt female servants had to die and be buried with their masters so that at his awakening from death-slumber he would have servants to wait upon him.

Then the cry of Prophet Mohammed re-echoed from end to end of the globe: 'Respect for women'! And: 'At the feet of mothers lies Paradise.' We hear that in all those countries polygamy was practised; we hear that 'the Emperor Valentinian II by an edict, allowed all the subjects of his empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives .....all the succeeding Christian Emperors practised polygamy, and the people generally were not amiss in following their example......*Jacitus* says that the higher classes of the Germans practised polygamy even up to the 19th century'. Historians have not a

word of reproach for all these polygamists: but because Prophet Mohammed limited the number of wives of the Arabs to four, he is blamed. Because he said 'if you cannot do equal justice among them you must marry only one', he is blamed; because he was too poor to marry and a merchant's widow who was 45 years of age offered marriage to him which he accepted, he is blamed. Because he lived with her for twenty-five years without marrying another wife, he is blamed. Because after her death at the age of 55 when the hay-day of a man is over, he married destitute widows to protect them, he is blamed......Moses who married more than one wife is not blamed. David who indulged in unlimited polygamy is not blamed but his psalms are loved and praised by Jews and Christians alike. Salomon who had 20,000 wives is not blamed but his songs are called divine; Krishna who is supposed to have had 25,000 wives is worshipped and his followers are proud of his feminine possessions. What a strange and jealous world it is! Yes my boys, what an up-side-down world it is!"

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Dr. Mumtaz was silent now. He looked up to the moon and presently he smiled and said: "Hullo old chap up there......what a lot of patience you must have to gaze through all the centuries with such calm and serenity at this queer nasty world of ours. And quite alone in grand solitude you wander through the heavens, with not a relative, a mate or a friend at your side. May be that this is the secret of your long life; no friction, no quarrels, no love, no hatred. Brave old stoic that you are!"

My master and Hussein laughed and after a while Hussein said: "My cousin here has vowed never to marry and to follow the example of the moon." On hearing this Dr. Mumtaz smiled and said: "I like his resolution. If he can stick to it he will escape all the troubles that a family gives rise to." He then leaned forward and continued: "Do you know, in ancient days men could marry their sisters... The Zoroastrian faith was a moral dualism of light and darkness. The sun-god *Ormuzd* for ever fought the gloomy demon *Ahriman.* The pure form of the faith often gave way to idolatry. The record says: 'The corruptness of morals in Persia about the time of the Prophet Mohammed was deplorable. There was no recognized law, or if any existed it was completely ignored. In the absence of any fixed rule in the *Avesta* as to the number of wives a man might possess, the Persians indulged in a multitude of matrimonial connections besides having any number of concubines. Jews, Greeks, Egyptians, Persians and others could marry their sisters'. Here the Hindu custom forms a strange and pleasing contrast, which deserves our praise and admiration. A Hindu must not marry even his cousin or a girl from his own village, but he must go out to another village and bring his bride from there. This shows a knowledge of the harmful effect that endogamy has on the health of the man. It was an advanced idea in a time when the mind was so in bondage that travelling was considered to be a sin and a Hindu was forbidden to cross the sea which was called the 'black water'.

If he did, he was an outcast, and I have heard of such a case even in the 19th century. He could however, travel on land and he went often very far to secure a bride. Here the caste-system is broken by a modern thought in the midst of antiquity.

We find caste-system in all countries in ancient times. In Christendom the name *Serf* means nothing but a slave. A man never could get out of Serf-dom. In India he was the *Sudra*, the untouchable that was an outcast and up to the present time may not enter a temple to worship there. In Persia he was the man who had to work with fire, water and earth, for all those three elements were sacred to the Persians and he who touched them defiled them and consequently was an outcast. It is therefore that the Parsees do not smoke as to bring fire near the mouth means to defile it by the human breath. Thus religion has given rise to an excellent habit. It is therefore also that the priest in the sacred fire-temple covers his mouth with a veil and his hands are gloved. All these beliefs are deeply rooted in the laws of nature, pointing either to hygiene or to the danger that a careless approach to the elements involves. But, here again conservatism drags on *ad-infinitum* as with the appearance of science there was no longer need for such precautions. Owing to such conservatism, Parsee. Hindu and Jewish religions are non-missionary religions. We never could become a Parsee but must be born such, neither could we become a Hindu or a Jew. In Greece likewise the workman was considered to be an outcast that never could be moral and that

never must be educated. Yes my boys, the world was steeped in slavery before the advent of Islam."

Now Dr. Mumtaz patronized his hubble-bubble again. Apart from that habit, I noticed that he was very much like the scholar Jacobi who had been the uncle of my master in my last life. Both resembled each other very much; in personality, ideas and manner of talk, and I began to consider the possibility of Jacobi's soul having transmigrated and taken the shape of Dr. Mumtaz. While I was thinking thus, Hussein asked a question: "Was there not slavery in the Muslim World also, uncle?" Dr. Mumtaz did not reply but he asked in turn: "Have you read the Koran my boy?" Before Hussein could answer, my master said: "I believe the Koran mentions the setting free of slaves." Dr. Mumtaz nodded and said: "That is so, my boy. In chapter XC 'The City' verse 13, you will read 'Free the slave'. It is actually in form of a command in the Arabic version." Hussein now asked again: "Why was this command not obeyed at once?" And Dr. Mumtaz replied: "Although Islam had come to revolutionize the world, it encouraged evolutionary methods, and did not effect sudden changes. Although the command in the Koran is: 'Free the slave', yet the method of putting this into practice was a gentle, evolutionary one. According to that, a slave was like a relative of the master who had come to help him in his house-work. He was dressed, fed and treated in the same way as any member of the family. If the master ever talked harshly to him, he had to atone for it by freeing

him at once. Here I will relate to you a historical incident which happened in the days of Omar. Once Omar had talked a little derisively to a Negro slave in the presence of the Prophet who was shocked and said: 'You, You, Omar, you speak like this?' Whereupon Omar at once prostrated himself and with tears begged the slave to put his foot upon his neck and say that he had forgiven him. The slave was horrified at the idea of putting his foot on Omar's neck and he refused to do so. But Omar vowed that he would not get up and would die lying on the ground unless the slave complied with his wish. To save his life, the slave had to obey. He touched his (Omar's) neck gently with his foot, and only then Omar got up. Do you call this slavery? Moslem slaves were frequently treated better than the very members of the family, and they were freed at the slightest occasions. They could rise to the highest positions. The slave dynasties in Egypt, Afghanistan and India bore witness of this. Sultan Mahmud's father had been a slave and innumerable others rose to be ministers and kings. The Prophet, in addition to the Koranic command 'Free the slave', had said: 'He who works with his hands (as slaves do!) is the Beloved of God'. With these words he initiated the *sanctity of labour*, that ever since has become a maxim. Owing to this, Moslem kings dug the grounds of their gardens and planted trees and flowers, or sewed caps, as did the Emperor *Aurangzeb*, to earn their living."

Dr. Mumtaz's speech reminded me of the unique paradisial conditions in Moorish Spain where kings

actually became workmen, and workmen, because of their learning, were honoured like kings. When Dr. Mumtaz spoke again, I need not say that I listened with great attention.

"Indeed," he said: "It was no wonder then that wherever the Moslems arrived, the poor despised slaves and work-men flocked in thousands to those tolerant conquerors to embrace Islam and be free from their torturous shackles. In India and elsewhere such converts received silver and gold and rich garments and were henceforth free to worship in the mosques, to be educated, to enter society and to rise to whatever heights they desired. '*Free the slave*' and '*All men are equal before the law*,' these were the sweetest fruits the tree of Islam bore. Fruits that had been so far unknown to humanity!"

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I saw that by now my master and Hussein had become anxious to learn more, and they looked forward to the after-dinner-talks of Dr. Mumtaz, since during meals he never discussed thought-provoking subjects.

To-night the three gentlemen sat again on the balcony. The moon was late in rising as it had attained fullness, and when it appeared like a huge silver-ball, Dr. Mumtaz said: "Aha, here you are again to cheer us with your light." Then Hussein remarked: "I wonder whether the moon is inhabited uncle." Dr. Mumtaz shook his head: "I don't think so," he said: "But there may be some kind of human-beings on

the planet Mars; I am afraid we will have to wait until astronomers discover a method by which they can pry into the secrets of those celestial denizens." With these words he turned to his *hookah*, and after a while as though its gurgling noise had given him some information, he suddenly said: "What wonderful astronomers the Arabs were! No doubt their inspiration has been derived from the Koran." Then I heard the voice of my master, who said: "But uncle...we read that the Arabs had learnt astronomy from the Greeks and the Hindus." Dr. Mumtaz smiled and said: "The books in which you read this were prepared for young people like you by the antagonists of Islam. In these days even quite sincere Historians copy such statements, because, as a famous English author said: 'When you repeat a lie three times, it becomes a truth'. Indeed, most historical books say that the Arabs learnt astronomy from the Greeks and Hindus not only but some say Christian scholars had been their chief teachers."

The face of Dr. Mumtaz had become serious now and he said: "Let me read to you something in this connection. If you are anxious to know, first let me have the two books that lie on the small table in the library." Hussein quickly went to the library and returning with the books and switching on the light in the balcony, he gave them to Dr. Mumtaz who said: "Thanks my boy," and putting on his spectacles, he continued, "these two volumes contain the English version of al-Beruni's experiences in India told by himself al-Beruni, the great Arabian Geographer,

Sanskrit Scholar, Mineralogist, and Encyclopaedist. The truthful, upright, sincere, universal genius who hated everything that militated against the laws of nature and reason. He was a great astronomer of the 11th century; a physical scholar and mathematician who had 'published works on most departments of natural sciences, optics, mechanics, mineralogy and chemistry'. He was a mighty anthropologist, psychologist, sociologist, and chronologist; a pioneer, and one of the leaders of those sciences of which no one in non-Moslem countries had even heard. No one took the trouble of going out to study other nations, the minds, the customs of other peoples, and no one had even the *capacity* of doing so.

I cannot say whether these volumes here also contain interpolations as I have come across several confused statements and contradictions. It is quite possible that antagonists of Islam have corrupted here and there the very Arabic version of these books which was then handed on in this form to those scholars who rendered it into German and English.

It has been said that in the 8th and 9th century '*Brahmagupta's Siddhanta*' containing astronomy and other subjects, and a medical book called *Caraka* were sent from India to Baghdad at the time of the *Khalipha Mansur* and *Haroon-al-Rashid*, and it has been said that the astronomical works of the Siddhanta gave to the Arabs the very first lesson in astronomy. Insincere Historians can go very far indeed, and sincere Historians copy their lies religiously. We

know that at the end of 8th and beginning of 9th century already two observatories existed, one in Baghdad and one in Damascus. To affirm this we need only read the account given in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. When the above mentioned books arrived in Baghdad, scientific observations with all the required astronomical instruments must have been in full swing. Not only that, but at that very time, or even years before, the famous mathematician *Abu Jafar Mohamed al-Kharizmi* had been busy creating the decimal system which we moderns know." Dr. Mumtaz paused and opening one of the books took out a paper which looked like a cutting from a book. Then he read: "Arithmetic based on this system was known by the name of *Algorithm*. This barbaric word which later on became *logarithm* is nothing more than a transcription of *al-Kharizmi* as was conjectured by Reinaud and has become plain since the publication of a unique Cambridge M.S. containing a Latin translation of the lost arithmetic treatise of the Arabian Mathematician *al-Kharizmi*."

Then Dr. Mumtaz continued: "In the same book to which this page belongs is a table of numerals up to ten of different ancient nations. Here we see the *Devanagri* numerals in shape of letters and signs with a zero at the end in place of ten. But in a more reliable book which you may cousult yourselves, the *Devanagri* appear as mere letters with no zero at the end in place of ten, neither does it give any other Indian numerals which resemble the Arabic ones while the Arabic numerals are given in a table showing their

development in 19 stages with the zero. In the 14th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica Volume 23 page 947 it says that no character for zero was found in India before the 9th century. The very Arabic word *sifre* meaning *'empty'* proves that the zero was invented by the Arabs, for had it been derived from the Hindus, the Arabs most certainly, true to their habit, would have kept the Hindu name.

The greatest ancient Hindu astronomers were *Brahmagupta* and *Aryabhata*, most probably born round about 476 and 505 A.D. as historians tell us. Another great astronomer was *Bhaskara Acharya*, who completed his astronomical work in 1150 that is, in the 12th century, a whole hundred years after al-Beruni had visited India. But since he is a comparatively modern product we will not consider him as one of the pioneers. We must not forget that as time goes on things evolved, if we believe in evolution. Islam had showered its treasures for many centuries on all the countries which it had occupied. Those treasures had leavened those countries. Every child was at liberty to play with them at its hearts-content. Yes, those gems had Islamized who-so-ever came in touch with them. We must turn our attention to Brahmagupta and Aryabhata, and I have often wondered why most of their followers failed to improve the system of their masters and were still at the same spot when al-Beruni came to India in the 11th century, as from the 5th century downward, 600 years had elapsed."

Dr. Mumtaz now opened one of the volumes and read the following: "The Hindus believe that there is

no country like theirs, no king like theirs; no religion like theirs; no science like theirs. They are haughty, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know, and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more of course from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other race of men like theirs and no created beings beside them have any knowledge or science whatsoever. Their haughtiness is such that if you tell them of any science or scholar in *Khurasan* or Persia, they will think you to be both an igoramus and a liar. If they travelled and mixed with other nations they would soon change their minds."

Here Dr. Mumtaz looked up smilingly and remarked: "They were quite the reverse of the Moslems of those times, who were not only anxious to impart their knowledge to others, but also to advertize the achievements of other nations, and not their own." After this he read on: "I began to show their astronomers the elements on which this science rests, to point out to them some rules of logical deduction and the scientific methods of all mathematics. Then they flocked together round me, wondering, and most eager to learn from me, asking me at the same time from what Hindu master I had learnt these things, whilst in reality I showed them what they were worth, and thought myself a great deal superior to them, distaining to be put on a level with them. They almost thought me to be a Sorcerer." Dr. Mumtaz now turned a few pages and then continued reading: "You mostly find

that even the so-called scientific theorems of the Hindus are in a state of utter confusion, devoid of any logical order and in the last instance always mixed up with the silly notions of the crowd, e.g. immense numbers, enormous spaces of time and all kinds of religious dogmas......I can only compare their mathematical and astronomical literature to a mixture of pearl-shells and sour dates, pearls and dung, or of crystals and common pepples. Both kinds of things are equal in their eyes, since they cannot raise themselves to the method of strictly scientific deduction."

Dr. Mumtaz paused again, and then said: "Somewhere else we read in these volumes that in the very first chapter of the famous *Sidhanta* that was sent to Baghdad, Brahmagupta says that every sun-eclipse is caused by the enmity of the Demon *Daitya* whose head was cut off by *Vishnu* for partaking of *Amrit* with the angels. His body died but his head lived owing to the *Amrit* it had taken. Vishnu anyway pardoned him and raised him to the heavens. Brahmagupta says that every sun-eclipse is caused by the fury of that head which tries to bite and swallow up the sun. al-Beruni is really quite perplexed at this mythological explanation of sun-eclipses from the mouth of one who is considered the greatest Hindu astronomer.

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Dr. Mumtaz now laid the books aside. There was a great silence that was only broken by the gurgling noise of the water in the *hookah*. My master and Hussein did not ask any question.

Evidently they were pondering on what they had heard. Meanwhile, the grey beard of Dr. Mumtaz, started a conversation with me in beard-language. He told me that one of his re-birth had taken place in Baghdad at the time of Haroon-al-Rashid where he was the beard of a musician at the court of the Caliph. What I heard made me realize that the culture in Baghdad at that time must have equalled that of Abd-ur-Rahman's paradise in Moorish Spain. When I told my brother-beard what I thought, he shook his head and said the Spanish paradise must have been a mere shadow compared with that of Baghdad! Baghdad! The eye of Iraq! The centre of beauty, culture and art! I heard of the beautiful Promenades, parks, gardens and villas, mosques and baths. Broad streets on both sides of the river Tigris. Streets about 40 cubits wide, and every household was supplied with water all the year round by the aqueducts of the building of which the Moslems were masters. Streets, parks and gardens were scrupulously clean, being swept and watered regularly. No refuse was allowed to remain in any corner of the town. Travellers of different nationalities flocked to the town each having a head officer to represent their interests with the Government and to help them in difficulties." I was told that "Baghdad was the city of memorable palaces; the city of the Arabian nights; the fairy land par excellence. I heard of the perfectly paradisial sight of one of the Palace halls in which there was a large tree made of pure gold with golden birds perching on its twigs. I heard of gondolas that in thousands thronged the river Tigris, adorned with

flags, animated with music, in which holiday makers went from town to town. I heard of colleges and the many state hospitals and orphanages each having a director. I came to know all about the amazing high position that women occupied. Women who played polo and fought in wars clad in mail. Women who vied with men in learning and culture. I heard of crops of poetesses, of women lecturers and teachers and even lawyers. I made the acquaintance of great women musicians and composers.

Rackets and tennis were played by both sexes. People dined off China or silver plates from white-clothed tables placed close to Diwans. They had forks and fine spoons and used napkins." I was quite bewildered hearing of this high civilization which in so many repects westerners were still lacking today!

Dr. Mumtaz had laid aside his Hookah-stick. Little did he guess that while he enjoyed a smoke, his beard and I had taken a draught of 'Elixir' that the glowing 'life' of Baghdad had offered to us. He talked again about al-Beruni "Yes," he said: "this polite genius. With what consideration he discussed every problem not to offend the Hindus. With what patience he listened to the astronomers' assertion that 'Mount *Meru*' was a reality." "What is Mount Meru?" asked Hussein. Dr. Mumtaz smiled and answered: "It is a fabulous mountain. Hindu astronomers say that it is situated under the pole and the stars revolve round its foot, so that their rising and setting depends upon *Meru*. It is called Meru because of its having the faculty of doing this, and because it depends

alone upon the influence of its head that sun and moon become visible. It is inhabited by angels and fairies. al-Beruni kept on arguing with astronomers saying that there is no such thing as a Mount Meru; but still they would insist and say that even the great Brahmagupta believed in the reality of Mount Meru." Dr. Mumtaz paused for a while and then continued: "None except initiated Hindus had ever seen the works of *Aryabhata,* and modern historians complain that all that we know about that important period has come down to us through commentators and quotations. al-Beruni had endless arguments with Aryabhata's commentators but since they insisted that Aryabhata's astronomy is based upon this Mount Meru, al-Beruni gave up in despair saying that since this Mount Meru does not exist he must drop discussing astronomy with them.

We find al-Beruni mentioning the book on medicine that had been sent in the 9th century to Baghdad to be translated into Arabic, and when he read the book in this translation he was shocked about the muddle of weights and measures. The weights of the people in every place seemed to differ and he politely blamed the Arabic translators for the dreadful confusion that prevailed.

He often complained about the great difficulties he encountered in India, as no one came forth to assist him in his noble search for the traces of human evolution that reveal themselves in the achievements of man. This search was his purpose. He did not come like a pupil to take lessons; but he came like

a master to examine how far humanity had advanced in this part of the world. But the Hindus kept their achievements, big or small, behind locked doors. Such was their effort to frustrate their own progress!

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Dr. Mumtaz at last had delivered his lectures at the College. My Master and Hussein had attended. The subjects he had chosen were: "English Literature," and: "History of the English Language." There was no mention of Islam or past Moslem greatness for that might not have been appreciated by the ruling class of India.

One day before the departure from Lahore, Dr. Mumtaz sat with his guests in the *Shalimar Gardens.* He commented on the beauty of this place which I heard was a creation of the great Moslem Emperor *Shah Jehan.* I heard that Shah Jehan's reign was the greatest and most vigorous period of Moghul Architecture. I heard that under his orders was built the finest of the great *Serais* for travellers in the imperial road from Delhi to Lahore and from Lahore to Kashmeer. The wonderful gardens I had seen in Moslem Spain, were repeated here in the *Shalimar* and others.

The thoughts of Dr. Mumtaz returned now to al-Beruni. While his face began to glow with admiration, he said: "al-Beruni, the great Arabian explorer of the earth and the heavens, what does the world not owe to him........" Here he paused for a few

moments and Hussein put in a question, which seemed to have worried him: "Who taught the Arabs Astronomy uncle?" Dr. Mumtaz considered; then he smiled and nodded: "Good that you remind me my boy," he said. "Before I reply your question, you will be glad to hear that I have found in the Koran passages which clearly give an answer to the question you asked me a few days ago, namely, whether the moon was inhabited. The Prophet not only refers to the planets in the Koran, but also to their inhabitants."

My master sat up in astonishment and said: "This is woderful uncle......In what chapter did you find it?" "There are many places that mention it," answered Dr. Mumtaz, and he continued: "Before all else we must consider the Arabic word *Dabah*, which means 'living creatures'. The Koran gives a definition of this word in Chapter 24, 'Light', Section 6, Verse 45 where it says: 'And ALLAH has created from water every living creature (Dabah). Some of them is that which walks upon its belly; and of them is that which walks upon two feet; and of them is that which walks upon four'. This definition convinces us that by 'living creatures' are meant those who eat, drink and breed i.e. animals and man, the kind of life that exists on earth.

Then, in chapter 17, 'The Israelities', Section 5, Verse 44, we read: 'The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth too, and those who are in them...' Earth is put in the same category with the seven heavens, which means, since the earth is a planet, the seven heavens must be planets too, and the line:

'those who are in them', gives clear evidence that they are inhabited. At another place we find, still clearer proof. In Chapter 42, 'The counsel', Section 3 Verse 29, we read: 'And one of His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth. *He has spread forth in both of them living creatures*'. Here again the word *Dabah* (دابه) is used. We can be quite certain that by seven heavens, seven planets are meant. The earth is one of those, and they are all inhabited by *Dabah*."

Dr. Mumtaz paused, enjoying the amazed expressions on the faces of his young guests. Then he talked again:

"As to your other question 'who taught the Arabs astronomy?' I first would like to know myself who taught anyone anything. Who taught Raphael to paint? Who taught Shakespeare to create immortal plays from the simplest stories? Who taught the bee to make honey from mere nectar of flowers? Who taught the plant to make starch from sun-light, and the oyster to make a pearl? There is no end of it if we go back and back. The feeblest hint is needed for genius to create, and the Koran does not only give hints on astronomy. It is full of great lessons, which the Arabs could not help learning and putting to use. 'Observe the stars in their courses', says the Koran, and further it says: 'Consider the sun and the moon that borrows light from Him'. The literal translation of this from the Arabic into English would be: "The moon takes of the sun's substance', which suggests that the moon is of the same substance as the sun.

The Koran gives sufficient instructions on cosmology, about the *stuff* the universe is made of, for it says: 'what you are calling heavens is only gas, and whatever appears solid has its origin in gases, and will evaporate and disappear, and the solid mountains will not leave a trace behind'. We find an echo of this in Shakespeare ten centuries later in his 'Tempest'.

Like all other sciences that received clear directions in the Koran how to proceed, what to observe, likewise astronomy received sufficient directions which way to look for facts, no wonder then that in the very first centuries after Prophet Mohammed substantial, progress was made in all sciences. The Arabs were the very first to give astronomy its *scientific* form. We know well that some sort of astronomy existed before, such as was mixed up with mythology and astrology. Historians tell us that astrology and astronomy, almost upto modern times, were identical and since we know that Hindus were great astrologers, we might take it almost for granted that their books on astronomy were of the unscientific kind, dealing mostly with astrology, the art which presupposes also a certain knowledge of astronomy; while the rational Arab-mind could make no peace with astrology since it was considered to be based on superstition."

Here Dr. Mumtaz closed his eyes for some time as though trying to remember something. Then looking up, he said: "It is quite clear that al-Beruni did not appreciate the character of the majority of the Hindus, and still, with what enthusiasm he applauded their learning when and wherever he found it, and there

lies his greatness! He remarked that the Hindus were quite good mathematicians and astronomers and 'excellent' philosophers. He praised their literature; he admired their flight of poetic imagination. He delighted in their animal story "*Damna and Kaleela*" which he read in Arabic translation. The grand Persian *Anvar Suhelli* was based upon this Hindu work and this fact was made known by the Arabs themselves as there existed no *plagiarist* among them; but the origin of everything that they utilized was broadcast and praised. The antagonists of Islam made base use of this honesty of the Moslems and said that all their achievements were of foreign origin. They went as far as to state that the *Arabian Nights* were of Hindu origin. There cannot be a greater lie than this! All the world knows that the Arabian Nights were originally written in Arabic and that they depict the life of the Arabs in its minutest details. Even historic incidents of the Caliphs of Baghdad are incorporated in the Arabian Nights."

Dr. Mumtaz was quite excited. He waited for a few minutes and then continued in a calmer mood. "Anyway, one thing I am glad of. In their effort to belittle Moslem greatness the enemies of Islam have taken pains to assure us that all the books that were sent to Baghdad from India served the purpose of furnishing the Moslems with original ideas. By saying this, they once and for all exposed their own lie, namely that the Moslems burnt all the libraries and all the books of the countries that they conquered. Once in a way the lying historians agreed with all

the honest historians who state that books were not burnt by the Moslems but were sent for and treasured. Indeed the love of books of the Arabs was so great, that the very sight of a book seemed to give them new life, because it was their religion that urged them to 'go in search of knowledge'. It was the Koran that asked them to 'go in search of the beginning of life'. It was therefore that they travelled round the world, to search in every corner of the earth for evidence of human evolution. Therefore every book that was available was secured Even an odd piece of paper lying in the street was picked-up for it might give a hint in that direction, and might prove a chip that could be added to the accumulation of the building material of which the Moslems meant to construct the edifice of human experience from its most primitive beginnings up to its lofty height, moulding it into a 'Whole' of universal knowledge by which man was able to see what he had been in the past; how he had progressed and what would be his future. By which man could collect understanding and be guided to his sublime destiny. This was the purpose that made the Arabs send for books and more books from all the countries in the world. From Greece and Rome; from Egypt and Persia; from China and India. The highest prices were paid for quite ordinary books, and their accumulation was such, that they could no longer be housed in the numerous libraries, but had to be stored on the house-tops in Cordova and elsewhere, and we hear that when the Barbarians invaded Baghdad, the river

Tigris was barraged with books, and at the Inquisition in Spain, when Moslem books were burnt, the Christian Spaniards used them for fuel for years and they hardly could be consumed.

It was for humanity that the Arabs worked and often worked themselves to death. They knew nothing of 'mine and Thine', and anything of value they had created, they did not claim to be theirs. They gave it freely as much to an African Negro as to the brown Indian, or the white man. Thank God they knew no colour-bar! All rudimental sciences they came across they developed and brought to a condition of ripeness and fed, not themselves, but the rest of the world on it. They never claimed that there was such a thing as a 'Moslem Science' or a 'Moslem Philosophy', nor did they call any knowledge as a particular property belonging to them. They never said that humanity was worth nothing except in Arabia. But those who are whole day busy with 'My Science', and 'Your Science', should realize and confess that they neither believe in a universal God nor in humanity as an organic whole. They in reality still believe in a tribal god and racial superiority which is the negation of all universality.

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Next morning after break-fast Dr. Mumtaz sent for the barber to have his beard trimmed. I received a shock when my master expressed the desire to see the barber too, as I thought. I was going to be razed to the ground; but I was relieved when I became aware that the barber only gave me a brush up

and a more respectable shape for the coming journey.

It was decided to go to Bombay first. Dr. Mumtaz had a friend there, who received him and his companions with great cordiality and made them very comfortable. The first object of Dr. Mumtaz was to visit the Elephanta cave at the Elephanta Isle. Seeing the Grandeur of Hindu deities, hewn out of solid rock, I noticed that my master and Hussein were truly over-awed. I learnt that each of the heads of the bust of the Hindu *Trimurti* was six feet in length! On my travels through the centuries. I had heard about the Trimurti; but now I saw for myself what it looked like, according to the conception of the Brahmans. The faces of the Creator (Brahma) the Preserver (Vishnu) and the Destroyer (Siva) resembled each other and would have been quite goodlooking but for their tremendous underlips and too large ears.

Dr. Mumtaz was very excited. He had never come here before and he praised this wonderful monument of antiquity. In other compartments of the cave, all hewn not of rock, we saw various other deities most of them about 16 feet high, and in one compartment was the statue of the destroyer *Siva* in his vindictive mood. He had eight hands and a necklace of skulls. His threatening attitude could indeed frighten the worshippers and I imagined that a nervous person would not have liked to remain in this cave alone at night.

I could not find much beauty and gentleness here; but I found power. Colossal strength and vigour, giving evidence of the great potentiality of the Hindu race. I felt that there was a quality of primitive life about these statues. They seemed to move behind us as we passed along, and I had an uncanny sensation.

From Bombay we travelled on to the *Nizam's* dominions to visit the *Ajunta* caves. Here we saw the twenty-five Buddhist monastaries and the cells where the Buddhist Monks used to dwell. The shrine with the figure of Buddha evoked in me a contemplative mood. What calm, what a spirit of gentleness reigned here. It was just as though every wall, every nook and corner said appealingly to the visitors: "Please do not disturb our peace."

Dr. Mumtaz praised the exquisite wall-paintings. There was not a position of the human-figure that was omitted. There were paintings of Buddha and his disciples; but the domestic scenes of love were so sweetly and tenderly depicted, that I was reminded of the creation of *Sakoontala*. The richness of colour, the delicacy of line, the poetic conception of subjects, could not fail to excite everybody's admiration. Dr. Mumtaz said that here was even some knowledge of anatomy and an effort at perspective. What priceless treasures of ancient art they were!

In Poona, Dr. Mumtaz led his guests to the *Jain temple*, the *Jumma Musjid* and *Shaikh Salla's* tomb. In *Bijapur* I marvelled at the magnificent

structure of *Sultan Mohammed's* tomb. In *Multan,* Dr. Mumtaz admired the tomb of a Moslem Saint which stands 100 feet high and can be seen for twenty miles with its beautiful coverings of tiles; and he said:

"How white and chaste appears this tomb in contrast with the exteriors of Hindu temples which although constructed most elaborately, lack smoothness and simplicity. They consist of so many parts and details and never look as though they were moulded out of one piece which is the peculiarty of Moslem architecture. It always displays power of the spirit while Hindu architecture expresses physical power of a mighty lion inspiring fear and awe in the on-looker. It seems to speak always of the 'Many', while, Moslem architecture speaks always of the 'One.'

From town to town we travelled. From cave to cave; from fort to fort; from temple to temple; from mosque to mosque. It was a tiring journey and Dr. Mumtaz realized that it would take months to see these ancient monuments of Hindu and Moslem glory in their entirety in the time that had been allotted to us. He decided therefore to cut short our sight-seeing trip, and after we had visited some glorious old palaces and seen some excellent Moghul paintings, we returned to Delhi where a younger sister of Dr. Mumtaz lived. The old lady, who had been informed of her brother's arrival, received him and his companions with great joy, and during our stay in her house, apart from her charming disposition, there was nothing but pleasure and feasting, as she had a very capable cook.

After a few days rest, Dr. Mumtaz took my master and Hussein to Agra to see the tomb of Akbar the Great. He said nothing during this visit, but when we had returned to Delhi and after the sumptuous evening meal sat in the garden on the white marble platform surrounded with flowers, where Dr. Mumtaz smoked his Hookah, he commenced talking.

"Akbar the Great would have been much greater..." he said: "But owing to his wrong conception of Sufism he demolished the spiritual unity of religions which had been achieved by genuine tolerance, and, if we can believe the historians, he created a multiplicity which manifested itself in the concrete forms of temples and places of worship with their idols which he went himself to worship. It may be that he was a great diplomat who by those means desired to unite all the Indian princes under his flag in service and obedience, or may be, he had misunderstood the Koranic saying: 'We believe in that which was given to all the prophets from God, without making any distinction'. To tolerate all religions in spirit, and look upon them with greatest respect as different messages sent by God from time to time, does not mean to adopt their forms of worship. Tolerance is not adoption."

Here Dr. Mumtaz paused with a frown and smoked his hookah for a while; but presently he brightened up and spoke again.

"Nevertheless Akbar the Great belonged to that rarest order of *princes* who are a blessing for mankind. Some honest historians say that 'he re-established

the Mogul Kingdom of Delhi over whole Northern India from Candahar to Bengal, and as far South as the Deccan. He was remarkable for his learning, his tolerance, his justice, the excellence of his personal character, and his administrative capacity; and it may truly be said that the foundations of the present system of Government in Northern India were laid by this great man who for the first time consolidated the kingdom and established an organised administration'."

Having said this, Dr. Mumtaz sighed and his face grew sad again; then he remarked: "The only thing which grieved me when I saw his tomb was, that it is a very poor structure, and not at all worthy of such a great personality......what a pity......indeed, what a pity."

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On the next day we went to see the Taj Mahal. There was a moon and Dr. Mumtaz chose the evening for our visit to the tomb of the beloved Queen of the Emperor *Shah Jehan*. Passing the entrance we found ourselves in a long narrow garden densely lined with trees, in the centre of which was a reservoir set in marble, filled with clear water. At the end of this, we perceived the Taj. It looked as though it was very far away, but I heard that the distance was less than a quarter of a mile. As we walked towards it, it seemed to me as if a heavenly apparition had descended; a white unsubstantial being that would fade presently. I could see that the snowy dom did hardly reflect the moon light, but it had its own radiance

of something holy and eternal which struck me as being the light of the very soul of Islam. While I was thinking this, Dr. Mumtaz said:

"This edifice is a genuine definition of Islam, as it represents that perfect resurrection which follows the complete and willing submission to the divine law. If all the sweetest music and poetry that was ever written were dissolved and crammed into the Taj, it could not fill it, for its beauty surpasses all the things of beauty that so far have been created on earth. It surpasses in its almost celestial expression all the loveliness that art and nature combined have ever given to the world. The architect of this supreme work of art, must have been not only a devout Moslem but an artist the like of which will never again be produced on earth."

Hussein grew uneasy while Dr. Mumtaz spoke and when he had finished his talk, the young man said in an undertone:

"But uncle...I heard that the Taj has been built by a Venitian gentleman, a certain Verroneo and a Frenchman whose name was Austin, and a Bysantine Turk." Dr. Mumtaz stopped short as though he had received a slap in the face. Then he gave a sarcastic laugh that sounded like an angry bark:

"What a combination, my boy," he said: "What glad tidings the lying historians have brought to you and others who are foolish enough to swallow their lies! It shows how soundly the Moslems sleep that such

lies can be shouted into their ears without making them blink even. The Taj was built by *Ustad Ahmed.* An old authentic manuscript of his descendents gives a detailed account of the construction of the Taj. Ustad Ahmed was a great architect, mathematician, astronomer, engineer and poet. He was called '*Nedir-al-Asr*' (wonder of the time). When he died, the work was continued by his brother *Ustad Hamid*, and later on by his son *Lutfullah.* This history was written at the time of Shah Jehan himself. In addition Ustad Ahmed refers to his building of the Taj in his own verses. He built also the fort of Delhi, while his brother built the *Jamia* Mosque in the same town. There exists still an Ustad Hamid street in Delhi.

This was a most gifted and famous family of architects, engineers and mathematicians. Books on mathematics by Lutfullah and *Attaullah*, Ustad Ahmed's eldest son, are still preserved in Munich and Berlin and the British Museum. *Mumtaz Mahal* the beloved consort of Shah Jehan died in 1630 A.D. Ustad Ahmed started the construction of the Taj in 1631 A.D. The inscription on the entrance gate, as we have read just now shows that the work was completed in 1057 A.H. (1647 A.D.) but the work seems to have continued for some years, as some historians say it took 22 years to finish the Taj, and 20,000 workmen were employed to build it.

How laughable it is that in the face of u crops of finest Muslim architects as existed then, an Italian and a Frenchman should have been called to build the Taj, men whose origin was unknown and

who were not known in their own countries. Antagonists of Islam perhaps would like to say that a Greek or an Italian built the famous Mosque in Cordova and the Alhambra in Granada, or any of the unique monuments of Moslem architecture that are scattered all over the world. You must not forget my boys, that the early Moslems were the teachers of the Italians; not only as far as building was concerned, but in everything that the Italian Renaissance has produced, because that Renaissance itself was a child of Islamic culture."

We had come quite close to the Taj now, and looking up, Dr. Mumtaz uttered an exclamation of delight: "Ah! I feel as though I could keep this delicate white blossom easily on the palm of my hand! Ustad Ahmed's artistic spirit must have entered the very heart of Shah Jehan and perceived there his love and tears for *Mumtaz Mahal*, and all this undying love of the Emperor for his Queen, all his deep grief of losing her, all his own sympathy and devotion for his Emperor and again all his own passionate love for Islam, Ustad Ahmed has embodied in the design of the Taj and has created a personification of the *Beautiful*, that mighty eternal ocean towards which all the rivers of love are flowing!"

After having examined the exterior and the interior of the Taj, and feasted ourselves on every one of its lovely details; 'its delicate curves: its lace work; its soft flowering lines; its exquisite ornamentations; its nameless grace...'; after having listened to the mysterious sweet echo in the chamber of

Mumtaz Mahal's Cenotaph...we went and sat in the garden at a place from where one could have a full view of the Taj. It seemed no one thought of sleep. The magical spell of the unearthly structure lay upon everyone and night or day were forgotten.

Then Dr. Mumtaz spoke again: "In the Taj the growth of the plant of Moslem architecture has reached its bloom, and indeed, a blossom of transcendental beauty it is. An ethereal flower in marble, expressing Oneness and simplicity so complex as to hold all the universe in its embrace. The immensity of its aesthetic and religious significance can not be imagined by us and baffles our conception."

Thus Dr. Mumtaz went on praising the great and unique work of art infront of us. Hour after hour slipped away, and we were suddenly startled by a golden flash in the East.

"Dawn is at hand!" cried Dr. Mumtaz, and then, nodding towards the Taj, he continued softly: "This white structure is not only a blossom; but it is at the same time the seed whence will spring forth the new dawn of the Moslem Renaissance."

After two days we returned to Lahore, where my master and Hussein prepared themselves to leave for England. Before setting sail, Dr. Mumtaz gave them many good advices.

"Education here in India is not the right one," he said. "Your books are of the wrong sort, and teachers generally do not know, or do not wish to

know anything of the glorious past of the Moslems beyond the Islamic Civilization in the East. They seem to know nothing of the past Islamic civilization in the West. English books on history never lift the heavy curtain that hides the eight centuries of the great Moslem civilization in Spain, i.e. in Europe, that via Sicily had created the Italian Renaissance and had entered every European country giving birth to what we call *Western Civilization* which is now the source of education in this country. Western historians erroneously attribute the Italian Renaissance to the Greeks, jumping from Plato and Aristotle right to the Italian Renaissance without touching the eight centuries of Islamic culture in Spain, that mighty cyclic stream which had its origin in the East, ran to the West, inundated every European country and then returned to the East under the name of "Western Civilization" bringing with itself *Christian educational Systems*, inspite of the fact that history records that for a thousand years the church endeavoured to keep the masses in ignorance so as to prepetuate its power.

The Moslem student was never enlightened on how the Western powers acquired their greatness and if its source was Greek, why they did not call theirs a 'Greek Civilization.' It is essential for the Moslem student to know the source of Western greatness since his education is derived from the Western powers. He looks upon his education as something 'Christian and Greek,' which is entirely separated from Islam. He should know that the Western people

adopted Islamic principles, which were disseminated all over Europe, from which they formed their organisations and institutions, and that therefore the Western education that he receives, is nothing but the heritage of his Islamic forefathers, the source of which was the Koran. If the student realizes this, he will return to the Koranic values which will be his salvation. Before his English education begins, he should be introduced to the above *Islamic Cycle*. After this he will know how to treat any falsehoods he finds in his books." "Yes my boys," continued Dr. Mumtaz: "You will know then that the originators of modern experimental science were the early Moslems, and that a Latin copy on optics by the great Arabian genius *Al Hazen* was the source upon which Christian Europe drew. And when you study 'the origin of the species' and other works of Darwin, you need only refer to the great Moslem Poet *Rumi* who lived in the 13th century and said: 'I died as mineral and became a plant, I died as plant and rose to animal, I died as animal and I was man', 'and hundreds of other instances I could quote which point to the true origin of Western Civilization."

My master and Hussein had listened with profound attention to the talk of the old man; but poor beard that I was, I could almost predict that since they were young and their brains were small, they were hardly capable of understanding what they had heard.

CHAPTER XIII.

From Dawn Toward Day.

Arrived in England, my master and his cousin thought they had entered a fairy-land. I was myself astonished at the change that had taken place, as when I had been reborn in England in Cromwell's time things had looked very different. Still, even then I had known that Cromwell was sowing the seeds of the great British Commonwealth, and when I remembered that, I was not so very much surprised at what I saw now, Here was the great democracy that I had predicted. Hussein was full of praise for everything- He delighted in the superior atmosphere that reigned here. People were not at all like the British officials out in India. They were so kind and obliging and he marvelled how many times the day they said: "Thank you". He said life moved so dignified here. Everything was so refined, so well organised, so clean. Everything was so quiet. There were no harsh noises. Hundreds of people gathered at the platforms of big stations in London, but you could not hear a sound. Guards, porters, passengers spoke with lowered voices. "Remember what pandemonium goes

on at the platforms of stations out in India" said Hussein: "People yell and shout as though there was a massacre going on." "And who taught England all what you find here?" said my master, and he continued: "You were not present on the day when Dr. Mumtaz had a talk with me on this subject. He said that the Western people, England in particular, had adopted the code of conduct from the early Moslem writers, whose source had been the Koran." With these words my master went and took the Koran out of his bag, opened, turned its pages, and having found what he searched, he read: Chapter XXVI, *Luqman*, verse 18 and 19.

"And do not turn your face away from people in contempt. Nor go about in the land exulting overmuch. Surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster......And when you walk do not loiter and loaf but walk deliberately with a purpose; and *lower Your voices*: Surely the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses." "Oh," said Hussein with a puzzled face. My master held up the Koran and declared: "Everything is in here, but we people have not the patience to dig out the jewels."

I saw many beards here; even more than I had seen in Cormwell's time; but I had no occasion to converse at present with any of them. These days were the days of roses as it was June and fairly warm. Kew gardens looked like a paradise of flowers and in the country the woods were fragrant with all kinds of wild blooms. My master and Hussein stayed in a Hotel in London, and since they had to wait

for the London University to re-start work after the vacations, they spent their time in sight-seeing. Day after day they went to the British Museum and passed many hours there. They saw the great libraries, fine picture galleries and exhibitions. They visited the tower of London. At Hampton Court they walked on tip-toes from room to room, talking in whisper-tone about Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. They went to shows, theatres and races. After they had done London and surroundings, they travelled to other towns in search of ancient castles, churches and other places of historical interest. At a sea-side town in Sussex in a small pleasant guest house they made the acquaintance of an old Colonel who had served out in India. Since they dined with him at the same table, they made friends with him. Hearing that the young men were not very comfortable in their Hotel, the old man gave them a letter of introduction to a Mrs. Brown, a friend of his. He said she was the widow of an Indian Civil Servant who died, leaving her in straitened circumstances, so that she was obliged to take in paying guests preferring Indian students.

On their return to London, the cousins called at once on Mrs. Brown. They found her a very pleasant lady and coming to terms with her, they moved in the very next day. The large house and its beautiful grounds in the suburbs of London were her own, plus a very small bank account. That was all her husband had left to her.

After having sampled the food, and after a stroll through the large garden that boasted of

hundreds of roses and a Tennis Court, Hussein declared that he did not feel like ever returning to India. My master did not like this mood of his cousin, and when I beheld the daughter of Mrs. Brown, a handsome girl of eighteen, I had strange forebodings! The name of the girl was Lillian. She had chest-nut-brown hair, dreamy blue eyes and a fine white comlexion resembling the petals of a lily. Her neck was beautifully shaped. She was tall and slim and there was something fairylike about her. I found that her parents had given her a very good education. She played the piano admirably, though her piano was old and out of tune. She was well-read for her age and in time it was discovered that she was quite a learned young lady. She managed the house in a charming style, together with her mother and a capable maid-servant. My master and Hussein were at present the only boarders and after less than a week Hussein fell madly in love with Lillian. My master protested violenty: "You can't do that!" he exclaimed: "We have come here to study and not to fall in love!" But Hussein shrugged his shoulders and returned: "It can't be altered now, I have fallen in love and I can't fall out of it again, come what may." He was a handsome chap, tall and slender. Yet very muscular. His eyes were always glowing and his complexion was much fairer than that of the majority of Indian boys. I could see after some time that Lillian was attracted. She liked to discuss serious subjects with him. He took her and her mother out to the theatres and he bought them many expensive presents. I could see that Mrs.

Brown's heart's desire was that Lillian should marry a rich man. Although there were many English boys who would have liked to marry her, perhaps none of them was rich enough. She had come to know that Hussein's father was very rich. She herself liked the charming young man and I am sure she could not help noticing that Lillian liked him too.

I thought the only obstacle to a marriage would be Hussein's religion. I am sure Mrs. Brown and her daughter had heard about polygamy among Moslems. When one day Lillian played a game of chess with Hussein which she won, my master who had watched the game, introduced afterwards a talk on the matrimonial customs of different races. He knew that Lillian was interested in the superstitions and wedding-rites of different peoples, and I thought I perceived his trick.

"Polygamy is still practised in many parts of the world," he said: "The Hindus and Mohammedans out in India have still a system of polygamy." I knew now that he was trying to scare Lillian and turn her away from Hussein.

"Nonsense!" cried Hussein; "No Moslem is obliged to marry a second wife. Every one is free to do as he likes, besides, the wife can always make a contract to that effect. She can claim half a million if her husband marries a second wife. The Prophet has initiated the well-known Civil Contract by which he has rendered every woman independent and free." "Is that so?" laughed Mrs. Brown who had joined the

group "I should think many ladies will take advantage of such a fine institution."

From that day she objected no longer when Lillian strolled through the rose-garden with Hussein in moonlit-nights, returning late. But my master was very worried. "Look here," he said to Hussein: "If your father were even a multi-millionaire, a man must do something in life, more so when he marries. His wife will not respect him if he loafs about."

"All right," said Hussein, who had up to now not touched a book: "I am going to study, but first let me be sure......I have proposed to her......so far she is willing......"

But now something happened as it always does when one has reached the threshhold of Paradise—there is difficulty in entering it. Something blocks the way. Another guest had arrived. A good-looking blonde, blue-eyed giant of about twenty nine. He had been recommended by a friend of Mrs. Brown, and was supposed to be the son of an American Millionaire. The most striking feature about him was that he looked like a Saint. He had an angelic smile which fascinated Mrs. Brown. His name was Mr. Broad and after a week he began to court Lillian in quite a gentle way. Hussein grew furiously jealous; but the girl soothed him and said she did not care for him. I knew this was true as I had noticed that she loved Hussein quite as much as he loved her. But then, there was her mother and perhaps the girl had not yet realized what mothers in straitened

circumstances can do! I imagined that Mrs. Brown was already planning. Mr. Broad was a rich American and......a Christian. The question of polygamy would not even arise, and...he was after all of their race... a white man.

* * * * *

One day when my master passed by Mrs. Brown's room, I heard a dispute within: "No! No!" cried Lillian: "I can't do it! I don't love him!" Then I heard her mother insisting upon something but I could not catch what it was. I however guessed that Mrs. Brown was reasoning with her daughter about Hussein and the American. Soon after this a beautiful new piano arrived. A gift from Mr. Broad. Lillian was very excited; she had always wished for a new piano. But Hussein entreated her not to accept the gift. Poor Lillian had no authority to accept or not to accept. Her mother, who was in straitened circumstances, accepted the piano for Lillian.

But more than a mere piano was afoot. After some time a lovely new carpet arrived to replace the shabby one which disfigured the parlour. Mrs. Brown quivered with delight:

"Oh Mr. Broad," she cooed: "How could I accept this...how very, very kind of you...what a wonderful design, but...are you sure you can afford this...I can never, never repay your kindness..."

Nor was this all. One day a new clock arrived that shone like pure silver. Mr. Broad placed it

himself upon the mantelpiece and the old one that never kept time, found its way to the lumber-room.

Nor was this all. Mr. Broad sent a magnificently embroidered Spanish shawl. Such shawls were fashionable in those days and Mrs. Brown wore it at dinner, radiant with pride:

But Hussein had lost his appetite. He tried to persuade Lillian to go away with him. "What? elope with you...oh...it would break my mother's heart," she said. My master sympathized with his cousin when he saw his desperate condition. Before this he had been glad that the American had arrived and wooed Lillian. He thought that was the best solution of the problem and Hussein would be saved. But now when he found that matters grew serious, he would have gone even and begged Lillian not to forsake Hussein; at least so I felt.

Things went from bad to worse, and one day Mr. Broad suggested a trip to the sea-side. Mrs. Brown applauded the proposal; but Lillian said she could not come as she was indisposed At this Mrs. Brown seemed to have shed tears as I saw that her eyes were red. No doubt she had wept, entreating her daughter to join them, since the poor lady was in straitened circumstances. Then Lillian was ready to sacrifice herself at the altar of 'mammon.' The maid-servant with the help of her sister was to run the house for a week and she did it very well.

One evening, when both the maids had gone to the neighbouring house to have a chat with the cook

there, my master found himself quite alone in the house. Hussein was no-where to be seen. He walked through the whole large house without finding a trace of him. Arriving downstairs, he smelt gas. Swiftly he opened the door of the kitchen, and lo and behold! Hussein sat there with his head in the gas-oven, trying to kill himself! With a cry of horror my master jumped forward and pulled the boy vigorously through the back-door out into the garden, dropping him on to the lawn. The fresh air revived him. My master had been just in time; had he come a few moments later, Hussein would have been no more.

My master did not inform anyone of what had happened. But when Hussein was better, he made him place his hand upon the Koran and swear that he never again would attempt to commit suicide. Although Hussein kept his vow, it did not mend matters. He began to live outside the house. He had his meals out-side and came home late, often dead-drunk. My master was greatly troubled. He pleaded with him in vain, and Hussein went down, down towards ruin.

When Lillian returned from Brighton, she seemed somewhat changed. Whereas formerly she had never touched Mr. Broad's piano, now she began to play on it. She often was seen in the garden in company of the American.

My master heart was aching. I knew he loved Hussein as his own brother. He suggested that they

should leave the house and go somewhere else. But Hussein did not agree.

One morning my master walked in the garden. At the back of it, behind a high laurel-hedge was a sequestered seat, beneath a high lime-tree. Here my master sat, and now and again I heard him sigh sorrowfully. After some time I heard steps and voices. My master turned his head and peeped through the hedge. Lillian and the American were advancing. They stopped short just opposite the place where my master sat behind the hedge.

"What do you mean?" asked Lillian. Mr. Broad took her hand and said "I mean to say that now when you have promised to become my wife, I should tell you all about myself. "Oh," she said: "I thought I knew everything." "No," he remarked, "There are some details. I never told you that I am a *Mormon.*" "A Mormon?" she repeated, drawing her hand out of his: "I have never heard this name before. I hope you are a Christian? "Of course I am," he said: "But I will explain. I belong to the sect of the *Latter Day Saints* of the Church of Jesus Christ. This sect was founded by *Joseph Smith* of Manchester who had seen a vision of Christ. Since 1830 the sect settled in Salt Lake City of the territory of *Utah* in the United States. We are saints and on leaving this world we are deified and our glory in heaven is proportioned to the number of wives and children we had in life. Hence the necessity and justification of polygamy which is not only a custom among the Saints but exists as an article

of faith. I have five wives and if you consent to be my most beloved sixth wife, you shall never regret it."

I could easily imagine the shock that poor Lillian must have received at hearing all this, and I marvelled at her self-control, as she said with a calm voice as though she had heard nothing extraordinary:

"You forget that I am English Mr. Broad." "In a way I am also English," said the 'Saint' quickly; "My people come from Oxford." "That may be as it is," she returned with a hard, cold voice, and she continued: "I am sure neither the English nor the Americans will conform to the doctrine of your sect." "You are mistaken," he said: "Polygamy is getting popular in America." She uttered a short scornful laugh: "Is it?" she said: "Then I am sure the Americans will act, as whenever an unhealthy custom gets popular and takes root, the Americans grow alert and root it out. You must know that we as well as the Americans are protestants...I hope you realize that I never can be your wife." With these words she quickly walked away.

"But it is not a mere custom to gratify desire! It is an article of faith! It is our religion!" cried Mr. Broad despairingly, running behind her.

Liliian and her mother did not appear at lunch. Mr. Broad was up in his room, packing, said the maid-servant. Before Mrs. Brown could ask him to remove all the presents he had bestowed upon her, he was gone.

Lilian returned with tears to Hussain assuring him that she had never ceased loving him, and that she had been compelled by her mother to act as she did. She begged him to refrain from drink, Hussain was transported to paradise. He dropped his fast life at once and took assiduously to his studies.

* * * * *

After Hussein had obtained his doctorate with honours, Lillian became his wife, and the happy couple, together with my master, the full-fledged Barrister, left for India. Lillian had wanted her mother to come with them, but Mrs. Brown, who was no longer in straitened circumstances, said she would follow later.

In due course two lovely children arrived, a boy and a girl, the delight of their loving parents. They all lived together with my master in a beautiful house near the seaside in the metropolis of the province that was the birth-place of Hussain and my master.

Good Dr. Mumtaz had passed away soon after he had greeted the two cousins and Lillian at their arrival in India. My master's father too had died, leaving his vast property to his son.

As the years went on, war-clouds gathered over Europe and in early spring 1914 Mrs. Brown sold her house in a hurry and left for India. What a happy moment it was when Lillian embraced her mother, and how joyfully the two children danced about their grandmother from England!

The boy was seven years old now, and the girl about six. They were clever children, growing fast and schooling in the Metropolis where their father held a prominent post as Lecturer at one of the big colleges. My master was practising at the Bar and it was well-known that he won every case that came his way; from his conversations with a friend I could make out that the seeds which Dr. Mumtaz had sown in his mind had opened and borne worthy fruit. He had become a student of Islamic history and all his talks resembled those of the wise old man of Lahore.

The war lasted many years, and when it came to an end and things were more settled, at home Mrs. Brown expressed a wish to take the children to England for education. The children were eager to see the birthplace of their mother and it was quite a treat for them to accompany their beloved grand-mother.

One morning my master was startled by the news that Hussein had embraced Chrislianity and Lillian had embraced Islam at the same time. Later on I heard, that Hussein had desired to adopt the religion of his wife. Lillian had told him that she could not give her consent to this unless she was allowed to embrace Islam. So they did it. My master shook his head at this strange mentality. But I thought it would not be a bad plan to make a law that for every Moslem who embraces Christianity a Christian should become a Moslem.

I heard that India was in the grip of unrest. Alarming, rumours were afoot, the people of India were eager to obtain their political rights from the British Government. A Congress was formed. A Barrister named Gandhi and another Barrister Mr. Jinnah, were members of this Congress. It was decided to non-cooperate with the British and processions were popular. As the years went by the situation worsened; no peace could be arrived at.

I blamed time...faithless time, for running along so swiftly, giving us all grey hair. We had reached already the year 1935, and when my master sat in front of his dressing-table in the morning, surveying his face in the mirrior, I noticed that I was growing grey. He was fifty-six now and although Hussein was of the same age, he looked much younger. He said this was because he had no beard. So I was being blamed in turn for making people look old!

At that time news came from England that Mrs. Brown was very ill. She was about seventy years now, suffering from Asthma. Lillian and Hussein went to see her. It was just in time, as a month after their arrival Mrs. Brown breathed her last. Then the grieved couple returned with their children to India, as their boy had finished his studies and was a Barrister now. He was about twenty-five and his sister twenty-four. She had studied painting in England, and when I saw her I mavelled at her beauty, her refined manners and her lofty mind. Moreover her pictures revealed the touch of a genius. Hussain was the image of his father in every

way, only he had not married in England. His heart was still free and he began his practice at once, working at present in my master's office to gain experience.

I heard that Jinnah had not been able to share Gandhis' views. He had left the Congress and had become the president of the Moslem League.

The Moslem people gave him the title of *Quaid-a-Azam*, which means "the great leader", while the Hindus called Gandhi the *Mahatma*, or "High Soul". I heard that Jinnah demanded the partition of India; but Gandhi opposed the idea and preached Hindu-Moslem Unity. Hussein favoured Gandhi's ideology. My master tried to convince him that the time had not yet arrived for such a union; but Hussein did not believe this.

After a few years another more dreadful war broke out in Europe. In Germany a man named 'Hitler' plotted to conquer and enslave the whole of the world. The Hydra of cruelty had staged a came-back and the poor Jews once again were persecuted mercilessly. This nightmare lasted for five years, ending with the defeat of Germany by great Britain and America.

The realisation of the golden dream of the Quaid-i-Azam drew near. He was going to give to the Moslems an independent state which he named *Pakistan*, and I heard that "Pakistan" means "the abode of the pure". I appreciated this name very

much as I knew from experience that nothing can develop and rise without being purified first.

In 1947 came the partition of India, and I could not help marvelling at the British, as we can hardly find an example in history which equals the graceful gesture with which great Britain handed over power. Her traditional greatness asserted itself which always preferred to seek a friendly and peaceful solution to one of despotic force.

Nobly and quickly the British standard was lowered, and the green flag with its white Crescent and Star was hosisted instead. It was a moment fraught with great historical significance, and the people went well-nigh mad with joy.

The bloodshed and the gruesome scenes that followed after the with-drawal of the British, I would rather not describe. The two great leaders and their peoples were horrified at the catastrophe they witnessed and I could easily imagine that thousands who had hoped for peace and happiness, died of broken hearts. Never-the-less, I knew that the beginnings of everything great are generally beset with indescribable misery, and I marvelled at the courage and bravery with which the people bore it all. Beneath the mountainous burden of calamities, the Moslems rejoiced to have won freedom at last. How unfortunate was it then that he who had made this freedom possible died soon after his glorious achievement, bewailed by his noble sister Fatimah; bewailed by every man, woman and child;

bewailed by the British; by all the nations of the world and by the Hindus too, who only about nine months ago had listened to the emotional speech delivered by Jinnah when their own saintly leader Mahatma Gandhi had been brutally assassinated.

The two newly created Nations struggled desperately and with the passing years they have been able to surmount the chaos in which they had been plunged. Pakistan climbed miraculously from the abysmal depth of distress, beginning to realize its glorious past, trying to live up to its unique greatness. Islam, the giver of all those things that had made progress possible for all nations in the past, was having its Renaissance. The women, of not only Pakistan, but of all the Islamic countries discarded their mumified life, rose as true helpmates of their husbands and shed those outworn abominable customs that like poisonons weeds and vermin had hampered their progress.

*   *   *   *   *

One day when my master had his nap in the verandah after lunch, I overheard a conversation between Lillian and Hussein who sat close by. I heard Hussein ask Lillian whcther she would like to re-embrace Christianity. "No," said Lillian: "But I would like you to re-embrace Islam." "That can be done," he returned: "Believe me, I would become anything for your sake; a Hindu, a Jew, a Buddhist or a Parsee. I would worship even a clay-idol if this would please you." She smiled and shook her head: "I would never

demand all this from you," she said: "But if you would re-embrace Islam, this would make me happy."

"It shall be done right here," he said, and after a pause he continued gently:

"There is no God but God, and Mohammad is His messenger." Then he smiled, took her head and said: "Now we are both Moslems; but I assure you, when I was a Christian I discovered what a beautiful religion Christianity is. Everything in nature professes the Trinity." She pressed his hand with a wistful smile and said: "After I had become a Moslem I found that everything in nature and '*beyond*' nature professes the *One.*

Hussein grew serious: "Indeed," he said. Everything belongs to the One. All our religions, all our ambitions and aspirations: all our activities, our joys and sorrows, all our possessions, our life and death, our very souls belong to the One." "I know it," she said with deep emotion: "Therefore such peace reigns in my heart."

But I marvelled at the power of love, that could make a man drop all his prejudices, level all differences and cause him to endure ordeals of fire and water. I was reminded of Akbar the Great and I remembered a day in Lahore when Dr. Mumtaz talked to a scholar friend of his in my master's presence. He said that Akbar the Great had recognized that all religions lead to the One, and the Monarch one day had said to his Rajput Queen: "My dear

Queen, I worship with you wherever you feel like worshipping, even if it be in your ancestral temple," and he quoted to her some verses of his courtier friend and poet *Abdul Rasul*:

"*Whether in mosque or in church,*
Whether in synagogue or fire-temple
Everywhere the **One** *is worshiped...*
The source of everything ts **One.**

Since years I had noticed that my master had given himself to the study of the Koran, and now that he was old and had retired from his profession, he started a regular research of Islamic history. Old forgotten books; books that were out of print; old manuscripts and documents where he could find some glimpses of the great past of the Moslems, accumulated in his office; and I was surprised to see how much he resembled not only Dr. Mumtaz but also the scholar "Jocobi" and the Italian "Lorenzo" the acquaintance of whom I had made during my travels through previous centuries.

When he found a book that had been published in 1919 by Robert Briffault, a great British writer, he could hardly wait for the evening, because after dinner he usually read something from the Koran or other books dealing with Islam, to Lillian and Hussein. Lillian had been a great admirer of Greek art, she had loved everything that was Greek. Plato and Aristotle were in her eyes the only source of Western civilization. After she had become a Moslem and had known more of Islam, and the great achievements of

the early Moslems, the Greeks had to take a back seat, and she became genuinely interested in the speeches and readings of my master. During all these years she had learnt Urdu and could read and write fluently. Often in the evening my master read to her and Hussein the poetry of the great poet Iqbal, and on one such occasion she said that justice had not yet been done to Iqbal's poetry since some of it opened such transcendental vistas that hardly had been realized by any poet of the East or West.

Having heard that my master had secured a book by a British author in which the glories of Moslem culture were depicted, she and her husband looked forward when he would open the book and read. This then is what they heard:

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories. Science owes a great deal more to Arab culture; it owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, prescientific. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks, were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systemized, generalized theorised, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and long observation, experimental inquiry, were altogether alien to the Greek temperament. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry of new methods of investigation, of the method of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown

to the Greeks. That spirit and these methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs... The spirit in which the Arabs made use of existing materials was the exact opposite of that of the Greeks...For the Greeks it was in theory and generalization that the interest lay, they were neglectful and careless of facts; the Arabian inquirer's zeal, on the contrary, was careless of theory, and directed to the accumulation of *concrete facts*, and to giving to their knowledge a precise and *quantitative* form. What makes all the difference between fruitful, enduring science and mere loose scientific curiosity, is the quantitative as against the qualitative statement, and the anxiety for the utmost attainable accuracy in messurement...so much importance did they attach to accuracy in their records that those of special interest were formally signed on oath in legal form.

The same objective and quantitative spirit is manifested in all their activities. When *al-mamun* ordered his postmaster *Ibn Khurdadbegh* to draw up an account of his dominions, and of all the sea and land routes in use—the first of these numerous geographical works of the Arabs which opened a new view of the world and a new geography—he insisted that each place should be localized by accurately determined longitudes and latitudes. al-Beruni travelled forty years to collect mineralogical specimens; and his tables and specific weights obtained by differential weighing are found to be correct. *Ibn Baitar* collected botanical specimens from the whole Moslem world, and compared the Floras of India and Persia with

those of Greece and Spain; his work describing 1,400 plants is pronounced by ',Meyer" "a monument of industry." Contrast that spirit of scientific minuteness and perseverance in observation with the speculative methods of the ancients who scorned mere empiricism. Contrast it with Aristotle who wrote on Physics without performing a single experiment, and on Natural History without taking the trouble to ascertain the most easily verifiable facts, who calmly states that men *have more teeth than women*, while "Galen," the greatest classical authority on anatomy, informs us that the lower jaw consists of two bones, a statement which is accepted unchallenged till *Abd-al-Letif* takes the trouble to examine human skulls!"

"Oh how amusing," said Lillian, interrupting my master: "When Aristotle was so ignorant why should the world make a hero of him?" Hussein laughed and said: "Because the world, either from ignorance or jealousy, never puts things in their proper places. A man who should sit on a mere chair is put upon a high pedestal, and a man who should dwell amongst the stars, lies in dust."

Lillian had looked at the title of the book: "The Making of Humanity" she said: What a fine book .. please read on, brother. And my master read on. He read until it was quite late and he promised to continue the reading on the next evening.

* * * *

My master had asked Lillian whether she would like to read the book herself, but she declined. She had grown old and her eyes gave her trouble. She could not read very well even with the aid of glasses. My master's eyesight was still quite good; consequetly on the following evening after dinner, he opened again "The Making of Humanity" and commenced to read to Lillian and Hussein who listened with great attention:

"Under absolute religious tolerance Christians enjoyed complete freedom in the Spanish Khalifate. They had their own Bishops. Several monasteries existed in the outskirts of the capital which served as hostels for travellers, and monks were commonly seen in the streets of Cordova. From all parts of Europe numerous students betook themselves to the great Arab Seat of learning in search of the light which only there was to be found—*Alvaro*, a Cordovian Bishop writes in the 9th Century: "All the young Christians who distinguish themselves by their talent know the language and literature of the Arabs, read and study passionately the Arab books, gather at great expense, grand libraries of these and everywhere proclaim with a loud voice how admirable is that literature." The famous *Gerbert of Aurilla* brought from Spain some rudiments of astronomy and mathematics and taught his astonished pupils from terrestial and celestial globes. Though his learning was not deep and erroneously he is credited with introducing the decimal notation (he still used the Roman *abacus*) his keen taste for knowledge "stolen

from the Saracen," (in William of Malmesbury's phrase) made him as Pope Sylvester II, the hero of fantastic Faust legends widely popular throughout the Middle ages...............Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslem science. He never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and Arabian science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. Discussions as to who was the originator of the experimental method, like the foisting of every Arab discovery or invention on the first European who happenes to mention it, such as the invention of the compass to a fabulous Flavio Gioja of Amalfi, of alcohol to Arnold of Villeneuve, of lenses and gun-powder to Baron of Schwarts, are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origin of European civilization. The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe; it had been proclaimed by *Abelard of Bath*, by *Aleaxander of Neckam*, by *Vincent of Beauvais*, by *Arnold of Villenevue*, by *Bernard Silvestris*, who entitles his manual 'Experimentarias' ....The pharmaco-poeia created by the Arabs is virtually that which but for the recent synthetic and organotherapic preparations, is in use in the present day; our common drugs, such as *nux vomica*, *rhubarb*, *aconite*, *gentian*, *myrrh*, *calomel*, and the structure of our prescriptions belong to Arabic medicine..............The medical school of Montpellier was founded on the pattern of that of Cordova. The

example was initiated at Padua and later at Pisa, where together with the *Canoun Avicenna* (Ibn Sina) and the *Surgery* of *Abul-Kasim*, which until the seventeenth century remained the text-books of medical science throughout Europe, were taught the mathematics and astronomy of the Moors. Those were the nurseries which were one day to bring forth *Falllapius Vesalius, Cardan.* Harvey and *Galileo*...... ....Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world, but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the *Giant* to which it had given birth rise in his might. It was not science which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of *Islam* communicated its first glow to European life."

"Bravo," said Hussein, "How refreshing to hear such words from a Westerner."

"How lovely," exclaimed Lillian: "What is the title of the next chapter?"

"The Rebirth of Europe," informed my master; "in which Briffault proves that this rebirth was brought about by Islamic culture." "Do read us some of it, please," requested Lillian. My master turned a few pages and then he read. "Christian rulers entrusted the education of their sons to Arabian tutors, and when afflicted with some obstinate disorder betook themselves to Cordova to consult the most eminent physicians. Even between Christian ecclesiastics and Moorish Princes there was

friendly intercourse. The translation of the Arab Almanack by Bishop Harith, and a history of the Franks written in Arabic by Bishop Gobmar of Gerona, were dedicated to Khalif Hakim. Intermarriage, common among the people, was not infrequent among the nobility, and even King Alfonso V of Leon, gave his sister in marriage to Muhammad, King of Toleda, and Alfonso VI married Princess *Zayda* the daughter of Ibn Abet, King of Leville. Al Mansur married Teresa the daughter of Bermudu II, who with the consent of her family adopted the husband's faith.

The lustre of Moorish elegance circulated unimpeded throughout the peninsula and the South of France—Rude, illiterate, unwashed Robber-Barons gave place to men who delighed in poetry and music and foregathered in tournaments of song. Loose woollen gowns and leather-jerkins were exchanged for close-fitting braided pourpoints, first known as *jibons* (Arabic-*jubba*) and mantles of shimmering silk, the fashion for which gradually extended to Northern Europe. Women joined as equals, as in Moorish Spain, in the intellectual interests and artistic tastes of men. They discarded nun-like habits for fine apparel and jewels, developed a waist and rustled silken trains...An Arab author, *Ibn Jabair*, thus describes the appearance of the women of the period: "They went forth clad in robes of silk the colour of gold, wrapped in elegant mantles, covered with many-coloured veils, shod with gilt shoes, laden with collars, adorned with khol and perfumed with attar,

exactly in the costume of our Moslem ladies."...Song and music which filled the rose-gardens of Andalusia, where every Court rang with the sound of romances and quatrains, where poets and musicians formed part of the retinue of every Moorish Prince, where skill in versification was counted an indispensible accomplishment of every knight and every lady, spread to the adjacent lands of Castile, Catalonia and Provence. Stringed musical instruments which are throughout the Middle Ages spoken of as '*Moresques*', were first introduced into Europe, the lute, the violin, the psaltery (Or Santyr,) ancestor of the *piano*, the Zither, the tabor, and the guitar......... ....Rhyme of a rude kind had previously been used in monkish doggerel, but its elaborate pattern in Troubadour song, the assonant repetition of the some word in alternate lines, the research of 'difficult rhymes,' the *tornada* or *envoi* (in-variably used in the *ghazal*) are traits of Arabic poetry, and of the Spanish School in particular..............Spanish and Provencal poetry is the birth-song of European literature, awakening poetic echoes throughout Europe, from the Minnesingers of Germany to pre-Dantesque Italy, calling the (so called) 'vulgar tongue' of the new Europe to literary life............It was in Sicily at the Saracenized Court of Frederic II, that the first Italian lyrics were produced in the native tongue. ....Dante hesitated long whether he should write his great poem in Latin; his decision was determined by his admiration for the achievements of Provincial song, and from them his language, form and

treatment were derived- Without the Spanish Moors no troubadours, without troubadours no Dante."

My master paused and Lillian said: "To me all this is a revelation. I feel that I have stepped out of the gloom of uncertainry into the light of truth standing on firm ground from where I can see very far into the past......How good it is to know whence one is coming." "Quite so," said Hussein: "we can really be proud that our ancestors were the Saracens. I marvel at the magnificent compound of the character of Saracens, In their silks and laces they were the most refined and chivalrous...the gentlest of gentlemen in the drawing room; like modest maidens they were among ladies—In the battlefield they were the bravest of brave, the manliest of manly. They fought like lions with 'unspeakable valour, but they never injured a fallen foe; on the contrary, they raised him with the tenderness of a mother and nursed him. There was no *Beast* of *Belsen* among them."

While, my master read on, I noticed that a youthful glow illumed the faces of the two old people who listened spell-bound.

Their children were not staying with them now. The daughter had married many years ago and lived with her husband and children at Murree. The son had wedded a Punjabi girl of extraordinary beauty. They lived apart in a house of their own.

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Time had advanced again–arriving at 1955.

Lillian and Hussein had grown very old, white-haired and a bit shaky, but on the whole, they were still quite active. My master who was not a day older than Hussein, looked very ancient. That was because of me, his beard, his snow-white beard! It is me who makes people look older than they are. But there is an advantage, as a man with a beard looks always intellectually superior to the beardless. A bearded man looks old but wiser; people respect him, as he reminds of 'authority'. Therefore, I would advise all young men to grow a beard.

Pakistan had made lightning-speed progress and its Dawn was rapidly breaking into day. Inspite of this, there were many Muslems who in their hearts favoured Hindu-Moslem Unity. Hussein was one of those. When my master discussed with him the political situation, Hussain aired his opinions, but my master never agreed with him as far as Hindu-Moslem Unity was concerned. One evening then after dinner my master took the matter resolutely into his hand and he made a speech in which Hussein's mistake stood out as clear as day-light:

"If you are prepared to listen to me", he said: "I would like to explain to you a thing or two."

Lillian was present, and since Hussein agreed to listen, my master commenced to talk. "The British contact had brought awakening of nationalism in India," he said. "The secondaries of this movement

were idolization of the past practicised by the Hindus. This was a necessary consequence. The returning to the past accentuated the differences between Moslems and Hindus since Akbar the Great who had lived more or less in peace with both peoples. The more the materialistic inclination developed, the wider grew the gulf between them. The evolution in India had reached the antithesis of spirit and matter in Buddha and Christ, and had gone no further before Muhammad, and every direct appeal to Muhammad was being deliberately blocked by the nationalistic movement. The ideology of the two peoples that populated India came to grow wider and wider apart. The only advantage out of Muhammad's teaching that was acceptable to the Hindus, was through European second-hand agency, but even that in the end grew more and more unacceptable, as the British themselves began to be unacceptable under the nationalistic instinct. It was at this juncture that some of the great minds realizing the necessity of uniting these two peoples to secure freedom for India, tried to patch up their differences. Had they even succeeded in their attempt, it could have been only a 'patch-up' indeed, but not a radical union which only arises through community of thought and community of purpose. It was therefore perhaps lucky for both of them that this 'patch-up' did not take place, however sincerely and anxiously by the greatest of them it must have been desired.

Having separated, both the people have now a God-given apportunity to realize the best that

is in them without making compromises with their ideologies.

The theory of evolution has been adopted by Europe after a long struggle by tortuous round about ways. The same case it will be with the Hindu mind. At present even the European mind has not yet shaken off the primitive egoistic instincts to put truth above egoism, and the anachronism that Christianity must be written as the last religion owing to which history is being turned up-side-down and the theory of evolution of religion is being destroyed.

How long the Hindu mind will glory in its past and fight against development after they had historically ceased to progress, time will prove, as it appears the fight goes on at every step and the struggle portends to be hard and long. When Moslems have regenerated fully, and when Hindus will have succeeded in getting over the nationalistic prejudices, then alone time may be ripe for the union that so many sincere souls desire.

The credit of seeing that the time had not yet arrived for such a real union, and that the period of incubation must be gone through in which both the parties must dwell entirely apart and on their own, lies with the Quaid-i-Azam more than anyone else. By his supreme 'Vision', Pakistan and even India, both have been provided with golden opportunities for evolving on their own lines and reaching fullest human-hood."

My master was silent now, and I was struck at his speech as it seemed to me a complete political analysis of a century of Indian history.

Then I heard Lillian's voice: "I agree with all you have said, brother," she remarked, "with all my heart I agree." Looking at her husband she asked: "And you?" Hussein smiled, took her hand, kissed it and said: "My Queen; can your servant do anything else but bow to your verdict?" Turning to my master he continued: "You are right brother; I was a fool not to have seen it before; you have opened my eyes." And after a pause he murmered with deep emotion: "Pakistan...my Pakistan."

The days had become warm as it was the end of April. Lillian and Hussein had left for Murree to spend the hot season with their daughter. They had wanted my master to come too, but he had to decline as the climate of the hills never suited him. So he remained behind in his residence with his trusty servants.

I had started my narrative some years before this when my master was about seventy. It took me quite a long time to relate all that had happened during my transmigrations through the many centuries, because sometimes a year or two elapsed before I continued my story. At the beginning of it, you will remember that I described my condition and that of my master. I mentioned that I was the snow-white beard of an old man of about seventy, who looked after me properly. I mentioned that he

was a very religious man suffering from high blood-pressure. This complaint, however, has left him and today, ending his seventy-fifth year, he is in better health than he was sometime ago.

It was a close day when my master strolled through his spacious garden at sunset. The gardener was still at work here, getting rid of the flowers that had faded. I remembered what a glorious sight the garden had been in March and the beginning of April. I had seen masses of multi-coloured Pansies, and even now some were left. Larkspur, poppies, nusturtiums, carnations had bloomed in profusion.

The magnolia tree had been a glorious sight in March. siris-blossoms had scented the air; but now the starry jasmins were at their best adorning fences and pergolas, and there were plenty of roses. As my master passed on, he came across a red rose that lay in his way. He picked it up, kissed it and smiled as though he remembered something. Then he called the gardener and gave him the flower with an order that it be put into water.

After dinner a friend visited him with whom he discussed certain passages of the Koran. Then he retired. Since, it was a very close night, he slept on the roof of the house which was very high and afforded a splendid view, all round. He slept soundly and at four'o'clock in the morning he rose as usual for prayers. Afar from some remote mosque called the melodious voice of a Muizzin: "God is great... come to prayer...prayers are sweeter than sleep."

What an emotional appeal the human voice had compared to the cold, metallic tongue of a bell. In some quarters of the city I had heard the Muizzin's voice transmitted by a loud-speaker. It was a thunderous noise that sounded like some business announcement. I thought this was a great mistake, for the human-voice was robbed of its religious mood.

After prayer my master went to sleep again, I did not sleep. I enjoyed the cool breeze that had started, and the fragrance the garden sent up. About five o'-clock my master rose again: but this time he turned toward the East to watch the sun-rise. It was still quite dark, and the sky was strewn with stars. After some time, Dawn stirred in the embrace of darkness and kindled faint yellow lights at the horizion. Pinkish clouds appeared above the yellow streaks and a violet veil enveloped the distant trees. The foreground was shrouded in a misty green. It grew lighter and I heard the twitter of awakening birds in the garden. The faint pink hue deepened into crimson and a golden fire shot up behind it. Then, I saw a strange vision. A multitude of people seemed to move out of Dawn towards Day. In the distant skies they marched up and up with the rising sun. In the foreground I saw a figure that appeared to be an Arab with a book under his arm. At his sides were people clad in various Moslem fashions with crescents on their flags. Presently, all became obscure again by the shifting clouds that seemed like the passing centuries. Then, the Moslems emerged

ain. At their sides were throngs of Westerners that looked like British and American. They were followed by great multitudes of peoples of all the nations of the world, carrying their own books and flags, yet their arms were inter-linked. More and more men and women flocked, marching up and up through the flames of sunrise. Suddenly, there appeared at the back of the multitude two gigantic figures that according to their dress seemed personifications of the East and the West. Each carried a gleaming pole to which was fixed a single broad banner right across, uniting the two men. The cloth of the banner was of ethereal turquoise hue into which the blazing silver-rays of the rising sun had woven the words: "*The Divine is our Destination.*"

THE END.

Hyderabad (West Pak).
25th March, 1956.